No decision on request to extend master concession agreement. PAGE 2
Tajibmai earns People's Choice Award in Battle of Voices. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

PACIFIC POWER ASSOCIATION
30th ANNUAL CONFERENCE & TRADE EXHIBITION
25th - 28th September 2023
Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands

'Pacific decision making should be at center of countries' energy transition'

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FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Acting governor David M. Apatang, eighth from right front row, joins a group photo with Pacific Power Association officials and participants of the four-day PPA 30th Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in Garapan yesterday morning.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

As the pace of the energy transition globally is building, it must be ensured that Pacific decision making is at the center of each countries' transition journeys, according to Dr. Kelly Strzepek, who is the assistant director for

See PACIFIC on Page 4

Apatang: AG now reviewing budget bill

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

» Palacios attends summit at White House, comes back Thursday

Acting governor David M. Apatang said yesterday that they are happy with the Legislature's passage of the budget bill for the CNMI government's operations in fiscal year 2024 last Monday, but he noted that there's a lot of things that they need to review including the proposed reduction of government employees' work hours.

Apatang

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Making Tourism Our Business: Tourism & Green Investments

By CHRISTOPHER A. CONCEPCION
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Concepcion

"A new study shows a heightened appetite for sustainable tourism amongst consumers, with 69% of travelers actively seeking sustainable travel options. And many high-end travelers are willing to pay more for their travel to be sustainable."

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ADVOCATING FOR CNMI IN DC CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios was in Washington, D.C. earlier this week as he met with President Joe Biden and other federal government leaders and heads of state from other Pacific Island nations. During yesterday's meeting with Pacific Island leaders, Biden reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to shared regional priorities and deepening cooperation around them—including advancing economic growth; tackling climate crisis; promoting sustainable development; strengthening health security; countering illegal, unreported fishing; and expanding our people-to-people ties. In the photo above, Palacios is seen with American Samoa Gov. Lemanu Maunga during their meeting with Tom Perez, Senior Advisor and Assistant to the President and Director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN
Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:
3

ON FEDERAL EXEMPTION FROM DOT CHINA FLIGHT ORDER

CPA seeks extra support

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has recently written to local leaders seeking further support for its efforts to obtain a federal exemption from the U.S. Department of Transportation's China Part Order 213 regarding incoming flights

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INSIDE

LOCAL
The Commonwealth Ports Authority has successfully completed its Tinian Airport Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Building Renovations project.
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BUSINESS
Gene's Barber & Beauty Shop now has its full complement of staff with the recent arrival of two new barbers and two new beauticians.
PAGE 11

WORLD
The missile strike that blasted the Crimean headquarters of Russia's navy last week killed 34 officers, including the fleet commander.
PAGE 13

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

No decision yet on request to extend master concession agreement

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has yet to issue a decision on DFS Saipan Ltd.'s request for a short-term extension on its master concession agreement that has allowed it to set up shop inside the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport for over 40 years.

During a previous CPA board meeting, CPA chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds addressed DFS' request for a short-term extension on its master concession agreement.

However, she explained that because CPA's legal team continues to research the legalities of the request, CPA has yet to issue a decision.

DFS previously asked the CPA board to possibly allow them to retain the master concession at the airport for at least five more years.

King-Hinds explained that DFS has held the master concession at the Saipan airport for the last 40 years, but their agreement already expired in 2018. To date, they remain the master concession on a month-to-month basis.

"They can't [continue] to make an investment if they're just operating on a month-to-month. If they continued a month-to-month [arrangement], it doesn't guarantee that they will hold the master concession for the next five years. It only guarantees they'll have it for a month. Now, what they're asking for is a short-term arrangement that gives them stability for the next five years. What they're saying is they want five years to be able to have depreciation on their investment, which will give us some time to put together a good [request-for-proposals for a new master concessionaire]. That's what we're trying to provide them," she said

King-Hinds said that, although CPA would like to provide this type of certainty for DFS, which has been a long-time investor in the CNMI, CPA has to look into the laws that govern the master concession agreement before the board can even discuss any extension.

"There are certain rules and regulations as it relates to concession and what we're doing right now is the legal research to ensure that we remain in compliance with the law. This is the first time the idea was ever brought up," she said.

CPA has yet to issue an official request for proposals following the expiration of DFS' master concession agreement and it's looking as though CPA will take a while before issuing one, given the state of the CNMI economy.

"We were in the process of putting out an RFP, but we had Super Typhoon Yutu [in 2018], then the [COVID-19] pandemic. We've been advised that this is not the time to put out an RFP because, with the way the economy is, it's hard to invest in the CNMI right now, especially when you're in a tourism-related industry and you have a policy that says you can't have your biggest spenders come back. Nobody wants to come and invest here if you're limiting the kind of tourist that comes here," she said.

Palacios, Hofschneider re-appointed to Cannabis Commission, Demapan re-appointed to SHEFA

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Jose Borja Palacios and Journie M. Hofschneider were re-appointed to serve on the CNMI Cannabis Commission board, while Kaelani B. Demapan was re-appointed to serve on the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance board.

Regarding Palacios' re-appointment, if confirmed by the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation, the nominee, who will represent Saipan and Northern Islands on the Cannabis Commission board, will serve a four-year term which will expire on Sept. 11, 2027.

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has informed SNILD chair Rep. John Paul P. Sablan (Ind-Saipan) that he and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang are confident that Jose Palacios will devote his time and efforts to carry out the regulatory mandates of the Cannabis Commission for the successful implementation and enforcement of the Taulamwarr Sensible Cannabis Act of 2018.

With respect to Hofschneider, Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor Edwin P. Aldan has informed Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation chair Sen. Karl R. King-Nabors (R-Tinian) that he is re-appointing her to serve her second term as a member of the CNMI Cannabis Commission representing Tinian and Aguiguan.

Aldan said Hofschneider, a resident of Tinian, has demonstrated significant experience dealing with the cannabis industry.

The mayor said Hofschneider's journey in the cannabis industry began in Canada where she was employed by the Canada government, at a time when the cannabis industry was newly introduced.

Aldan said while employed by the government of Canada, Hofschneider assisted with the implementation and enforcement of cannabis to ensure that it meets the government's objective of legalizing marijuana.

The mayor said when the CNMI legalized the commercialization and recreational adult use of cannabis in September 2018 through the enactment of Public Law 20-66, the Taulamwaar Sensible CNMI Cannabis Act of 2018, Hofschneider was the first qualified individual from Tinian to serve on the CNMI Cannabis Commission.

Aldan said upon her confirmation to serve on the CNMI Cannabis Commission board, Hofschneider assisted the Commission in launching the commercial licenses and non-commercial homegrown permit.

The mayor believes that if Hofschneider is given the opportunity to serve again, she will continue to provide valuable insight and knowledge to assist the commission reach its goals and objectives moving forward.

Pertaining to Demapan's re-appointment, if confirmed by the SNILD, the nominee, whose term with SHEFA board expired last Sept. 1, will serve an additional term of two years.

Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho has informed SNILD chair Sablan that he is confident that Demapan is highly qualified and will work on strengthening the SHEFA's goals and mission to provide residents the financial assistance needed in pursuing a higher education.

Tajibmai earns People's Choice Award in Battle of Voices

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
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CORRESPONDENT

Music Performing Arts Competition Corp.'s Battle of the Voices contestants, judges, and officials take a photo after the competition's elimination round last Saturday night at the Pedro P Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Music Performing Arts Competition Corp.'s Battle of the Voices officials, judges, and master and mistress of ceremony pose with Sebastian Tajibmai, center, after Tajibmai was awarded the People's Choice Award at the event's elimination round last Saturday at the Pedro P Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

Sebastian Tajibmai was hailed the People's Choice Award winner of the 2023 Battle of the Voices even as all 23 participants advanced to the next round of the Music Performing Arts Competition Corp.'s competition with the chance to represent the CNMI in NBC's America's Got Talent next year.

With the exception of one contestant, who was sick, everyone who auditioned for the Battle of the Voices last Aug. 29 and Sept. 16 at the Pedro P Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center made it to the next round of the singing competition.

» As all 23 contestants advance to next round

Tajibmai became a crowd favorite during the first two days of the competition as the 17-year-old's rendition of the Eagles' "Love Will Keep Us Alive" racked in over 5,000 views and hundreds of reactions on social media that won him the coveted People's Choice Award.

During the opening round, Tajibmai's did a cover of Brother Iz's "Somewhere Over The Rainbow," which brought tears to several in the audience.

"I feel humbled. I feel really grateful to have such a great support team. Especially from my school, family, and everyone that I basically met in my life. They really support everything I do and I'm very thankful for that," said Tajibmai.

His cover of "Somewhere Over The Rainbow" was a tribute to his mother, as it was her death anniversary just few days ago.

Tajibmai was just 9 years old at the time of her passing and the song touched him as it was one of the only songs he could remember from her.

"I wanted to make music the way that music I heard at 9 [years old] had touched me."

Joining Tajibmai in the semifinals of the 2023 Battle of the Voices are Donato Santiago, Dean Borja, Brent Espineda, Arriane Antonio, Matthew Manuel, Bernice Sabino, Bernard C. Sabino, Lorenzy Leo, Zoe Stephanson, Jessel Antonio, Ronilo De Belen, Raniel Santos, Donovan Castro, Johanna Mogar, Dwayne Castro, Jerry Ray, Robby Murillo, Elmer Delgado, Azenith Madelo-Avila, Charisse Ramos, Vince Silva Lawrence Tubera, and Bench Legaspi. All 23 will be battling it out in the next elimination round on Oct. 21.

One of the competition's judges, Vinnie Sablan, shared with *Saipan Tribune* that the elimination round was just incredible.

"People cried today and people have been in shock or in just pure rapture I guess… I love this vibe and I want to see it keep going."

Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Camacho was part of the audience last Saturday and was amazed by the contestants' singing talent and thanked Music Performing Arts Competition for staging the event.

The grand finals of the 2023 Battle of the Voices where the Top 3 winners will be announced and cash prizes given is on November.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Bernice Sabino performs her rendition of Les Miserables' "I Dreamed A Dream" during Music Performing Arts Competition Corp.'s Battle of the Voices elimination round last Saturday night at the Pedro P Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Sebastian Tajibmai does a cover of Brother Iz's "Somewhere Over The Rainbow" at the Music Performing Arts Competition Corp.'s Battle of the Voices last Saturday at the Pedro P Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

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Attorney for Hermina Mettao

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF:	]	**Civil Action No. 23-0105**
ROSA LISUA MOTEISOU **Decedent.**	]	**AMENDED NOTICE OF HEARING AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
	]	**DATE:** October 26, 2023
	]	**TIME:** 10:00 a.m.
	]	**JUDGE:** Joseph N. Camacho

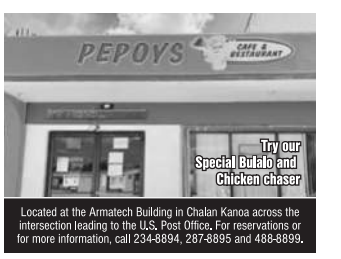
TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE ROSA LISUA MOTEISOU OR HER ESTATE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Heir **HERMINA METTAO** by and through her attorney of record, Robert T. Torres, filed an unopposed Motion to Substitute Administratrix for the Estate of Rosa Lisua Moteisou. The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation ("NMHC") counsel, Micheal A. White does not oppose this substitution. The proposed substitute Administratrix is **HERMINA METTAO.** The Attorney for Hermina Mettao is Robert T. Torres, whose address is 5960 Plata Drive P.O. Box 500730, Saipan MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition is scheduled to be heard on the date and at the time set forth above at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing.

Dated this 22nd day of September 2023.

/s/_____
Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk of Court



Located at the Armatech Building in Chalan Kanoa across the intersection leading to the U.S. Post Office. For reservations or for more information, call 234-8894, 287-8895 and 488-8899.

SISTER REMEDIOS BUILDING FACILITY FOR RENT

Available for rent is a two-storey building (semi-concrete), the MMB Sister Remedios Building in Chalan Kanoa #2. Building size is approximately 155 ft. x 42 ft. with stairs, common areas and restrooms. First and second floor (approximately 6,000 square feet each floor) and common exterior areas. Parking lot has 32 stalls including two disability access spaces. Additional area may be available for playground/activity area. Several used split a/c units are in-place from former tenants. Smal water-tank available. 5 separate CUC power meters. Building has network wiring in-place.

Suitable and acceptable uses include office space, church, (business) non-profit organization; school; daycare and early childhood/preschool facility. Not suitable for other purposes such as poker room; bar or other inappropriate businesses. Fenced and gated perimeter. Rear Annex building may be available, depending on proposal for rent/lease of the entire premises (approximately 7,000 square meters).

Minimum Terms: Minimum three (3) year lease (longer term may be available). Tenant is responsible for maintenance and repairs of the building/property. Asking $5,000.00 per month/ negotiable.

To schedule an appointment to meet and discuss, please contact: Law Office of Robert T. Torres, counsel for Mercederian Missionaries of Berriz (MMB) at rttlaw@gmail.com or Whatsapp/Text: 287-7859.

NOTICE: Inspections/ Walk-through by MMB-authorized appointment only.

CPA

From page 1

from China.

Last Monday, CPA sent out letters to the CNMI Senate, House of Representatives, and the office of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) seeking support in in its efforts for a federal exemption from U.S. DOT's China Part Order 213 which imposes restrictions on incoming flights from China to the United States.

"[We] seek your support for our request to the United States Department of Transportation regarding limitations on scheduled Chinese air service from China to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Our request pertains to 14 CFR Part 213 Order 2020-6-1 and seeks an amendment to the Order to explicitly exempt the CNMI from its limitations," CPA stated in its letter.

CPA explained in its letter that the importance of re-establishing the Chinese tourism market cannot be understated.

"Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese tourists accounted for a substantial portion, approximately 38%, of all visitors to CNMI. Further, Chinese tourists significantly contributed to on-island expenditures, with Chinese tourists ranking third in terms of spending, behind Japanese but ahead of Korean tourists. On average, Chinese tourists spent $681.40 when visiting the CNMI," said CPA.

For clearer context, CPA noted that in 2019, the CNMI had 185,526 visitors from China. Based on this figure and the average amount spent per tourist, the loss of the Chinese market will result in a direct economic loss of $126,417,416.

"Along with this direct economic loss, there will be an indirect economic loss because each dollar spent by a Chinese tourist generates additional economic activity. Every dollar spent by a Chinese tourist in the CNMI generates an additional $1.62 in CNMI Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The loss of the Chinese tourism market will lead to an indirect economic impact of $204,796,215. This means that the total economic impact of losing the Chinese tourism market is $331,213,630," CPA explained.

"The economic impact of losing the Chinese tourism market is substantial. This loss would not only affect the government's revenue but also private companies in the CNMI, particularly those in the tourism industry. With a projected drop in hotel occupancy rates and the potential exit of some tourism-related businesses, the consequences of losing this market would be far-reaching," CPA added.

Additionally, CPA said the reduced tax contributions to the government would compound the economic challenges faced by the CNMI. Because of these factors, CPA said it needs further support in its efforts to revive the China market.

"In light of the above, we kindly request your support of CPA's efforts to have the CNMI exempted from the Order 2020-6-1 limitations on scheduled air services between the PRC and the CNMI. Your advocacy would be instrumental in ensuring the continued resumption of international flights to the CNMI," said CPA.

According to an explanation provided by CPA about the China flight order, civil aviation relations between the government of the United States of America and the government of China are governed by the U.S.-China Civil Air Transport Agreement.

This agreement establishes various rights for the carriers of both parties in regard to air service between our two countries. Annex VI of the U.S.-China Civil Air Transport Agreement explicitly permits the airlines of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to offer unlimited scheduled air services between the PRC and the CNMI. It also states that these air services are not subject to limitations concerning flight designations or frequencies.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

PACIFIC

From page 1

the Australia Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

"No one has more expertise on when and where things are needed, than you," said Strzepek, referring to Pacific Islands in her keynote address yesterday at the ongoing four-day 30th Pacific Power Association Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition at the Crowne Plaza Resort's Hibiscus Room.

Strzepek is a scientist by training with a PhD from the Australian National University.

She said they no longer speak of just greening the power system networks, but of a just energy transition away from fossil fuels.

"Because at this moment in time, if we don't set a new course, we are committing to a truly unbearable future for so many," the keynote speaker said.

This year's conference team is Technology and Finance Readiness for a Green, Sustainable and Resilient Power System Network.

Strzepek said when thinking of the energy transition in the region, it is the opportunity for energy access, energy security, energy resilience and energy affordability, and importantly like some many important movements in the climate change space which have started and been led by the Pacific.

She said in Australia, they know all too well that with the energy transition comes challenges.

"We have many lessons to share, and much we now want to offer, but in the context of the Pacific, we are definitely not the only partner," Krzepek said.

She noted that when talking about financial readiness, there are so many funds already in place, and more being designed.

The keynote speaker said they have learned that even with all this financing assistance, it can be so hard for countries whose human resources are already so stretched.

She said together they must ensure that the financing is and can be structured to the Pacific context and adapted to meet the needs and circumstances of individual countries.

Acting governor David M. Apatang in his remarks thanked the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. for all its effort to make the conference possible on Saipan.

Apatang commended PPA for planning the conference and for inviting a multitude of key stakeholders in power generation.

He said the transition to renewables from fossil and coal power generation is the only way to save the planet for "our children and their children."

"Some would say that saving this planet weighs heavily on economics—money—but many would argue that it is money that is making our air quality less clean and costing more to keep it clean," the acting governor pointed out.

Apatang said he and Gov. Arnold I. Palacios urged PPA members to continue this collaboration and streaming cooperation.

He said keeping the PPA together and strong makes people sleep better at night knowing that each member got each member's back in times of great need.

APATANG

From page 1

Apatang, in an interview, said Gov. Arnold I. Palacios is off-island attending the U.S.-Pacific Islands Forum Summit meeting that President Joseph Biden is hosting at the White House in Washington, D.C.

He said they emailed a copy of the budget bill to Palacios and that the governor is looking at it now, while the Office of the Attorney General is reviewing it.

Apatang said once Palacios is back tomorrow, Thursday, they are going to sit down, go over the bill, and do whatever they need to do.

"So, we are [going to] try to iron things out before the end of the fiscal year," the acting governor said.

Without a balanced budget enacted into law by Oct. 1, 2023, there will be a partial shutdown of the government's operations.

Apatang said the Senate and the House of Representatives have been working hard on the budget process and finally they agreed on all the issues that they have been going back and forth.

Apatang said they appreciate the Legislature for passing the budget legislation a few days before Oct. 1.

He said before, governors had to wait until midnight because the Legislature would pass the budget bill at the last minute.

"We're good, we're happy. We just need to review everything that was being put together in the bill," the acting governor said.

Apatang said when the governor comes back, they will look at what the AG's recommendations are and see what they can do.

The Senate and House passed during emergency sessions Monday the budget bill, or the Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriation Act, that proposed to appropriate $114.2 million in total local revenue and resources, out of $163.4 million in total budgetary resources.

The proposals include an austerity measure imposing a 10-hour reduction in government employees' working hour per pay period.

TOURISM

From page 1

Last month in this space we spoke about the need to address our "neighborhood nemesis," property blight. As we celebrate World Tourism Day on Sept. 27, we turn our attention to this year's celebration of Tourism & Green Investments and this year's theme, "Investing in People, Planet and Prosperity."

World Tourism Day is organized by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to draw attention to the tourism industry and related issues. For World Tourism Day 2023, UNWTO highlights the need for more and better-targeted investments for people, for planet and for prosperity.

Here in The Marianas, we already have some "green" initiatives implemented, although limited in scope and number. Most establishments and homes have converted to LED lighting, and more are using solar power. Many hotels save water and energy by allowing guests to opt to use their towels for several days, instead of requiring daily washing. More restaurants are using local produce than ever since the inception of the tourism industry when there was no other choice. New road construction is incorporating bike lanes and sidewalks. Legislation to ban the use of single-use plastic bags is also a step in the right direction. Schools and nonprofit groups are organizing tree planting events.

But we are really only touching the surface of what is possible. A new study by World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), Trip.com Group and Deloitte shows a heightened appetite for sustainable tourism amongst consumers, with 69% of travelers actively seeking sustainable travel options. Today's traveler is also interested in wellness or spiritual retreats and indigenous experiences. And many high-end travelers are willing to pay more for their travel to be sustainable.

As a tropical destination, our ability to provide this for visitors is still largely untapped. For example, we could start with a community-wide commitment—beginning in our own families and households—to reduce, reuse, or recycle, even without compensation. Also, based on exit surveys, the No. 1 activity visitors to The Marianas plan when they travel here is to enjoy nature. We need long-term planning—especially with large development projects—for the preservation and planting of trees, shrubs and flowers to keep our islands green and aesthetically pleasing, help prevent soil or beach erosion and damage to our lagoons, and increase food security. These are two investments that can be made immediately, if we choose.

Which destinations are doing green tourism well? Costa Rica, a country I visited in 2021, is recognized as one the best eco-tourism destinations in the world. Here, lodgings, tours, and activities work in harmony with nature and the country's rich biodiversity. A large percentage of the land is preserved as national parks, wildlife reserves and protected lands. Another is Iceland, which after destroying 90% of their native forests and 40% of its soil, made a 180-degree turn and is now a leader in environmental policies. And closer to home is Palau, which revolutionized its environmental regulations, committing to conserve about one-third of its coastal waters and forest land and gaining international recognition in the process.

"Green" living is not a new concept to The Marianas; it is engrained in the indigenous culture of Chamorros and Carolinians. Before westernization, the natural resources of land and sea were preserved and carefully tended. Strict protocols under traditional leadership helped conserve marine resources by preventing overfishing. Trees, shrubs, and other plants covered most of the islands—providing food, shelter, clothing, material for transportation, medicine, and more. Living structures were constructed to capture the cool breeze. Rainfall was captured or quickly absorbed by the soil, replenishing the water lens that feeds our water wells. Nothing was wasted, and even leftover scraps from building or food preparation were left to decompose and renourish the soil (an example of this cycle can still be seen today at the traditional canoe house Guma Higgai in Susupe where wood chippings lie thick on the ground).

We say this to point out that "green initiatives" are not a new way of operating for us. It is part of our traditional way of thinking that can benefit us if we choose to apply it as we modernize. A return to green investments and environmental stewardship is really a return to ourselves. And as small remote islands strongly impacted by climate change, we should be among the first championing green living, beginning here in our own home.

Overall, visitor arrivals to The Marianas have recovered 45% year-to-date compared to FY 2019 before the pandemic. We are moving in the right direction, as visitor arrivals grew 148% to 24,128 visitors in August 2023, compared to only 9,746 visitors received in August 2022. But if we want to rise above the worldwide competition, we need to do better, and a return to a "green" mindset in the context of today is a necessary component toward that goal.

Happy World Tourism Day, and thank you for joining the MVA in "Making Tourism Our Business."

Christopher A. Concepcion is the managing director of the Marianas Visitors Authority.

MVA welcomes new, returning members for FY 2024

The Marianas Visitors Authority welcomes new and returning members for the new fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, 2023.

Businesses, organizations, and individuals are welcomed to join the state tourism agency for $100/year. Accounts can be registered and paid on MVA's English website at www.mymarianas.com, or you may visit the MVA office located at 3366 Beach Rd., Suite 101, I Liyan, Saipan, MP.

Benefits of membership include: business listing on the MVA's language-specific websites in Korean, Japanese, and English; opportunities to participate in travel and trade shows, sales seminars, and FAM tours; opportunities for business brochure distribution at MVA offices in The Marianas and internationally; detailed visitor data through monthly statistics reports; nomination and voting rights for the MVA Board of Directors; the opportunity to be a supplier or contractor for the MVA; and the opportunity to serve on ad hoc committees.

"MVA membership is one of the best ways to support the Marianas tourism industry and especially to stay current with what's happening in our major source markets," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "We welcome all parties interested in making tourism their business and joining with the MVA to rebuild and strengthen The Marianas travel and tourism in Fiscal Year 2024."

MVA currently has 188 members. Upcoming travel and trade shows are Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) in Japan, Dive Equipment and Marketing Association (DEMA) Show 2023 in the USA, and ITB Asia Singapore, Asia's leading B2B travel trade show and convention.

For more information, visit www.mymarianas.com or contact Community Projects coordinator Jack Aranda at the MVA Membership Division at (670) 664-3210 or at jaranda@mymarianas.com. ***(PR)***

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

The Marianas Visitors Authority office at the Saipan Gold Beach Hotel along Beach Road in Garapan.

Atomy choose The Marianas as reward vacation destination

MVA

Top-performing employees of global network marketing company Atomy enjoy a company rewards vacation on Saipan, The Marianas, on Sept. 21, 2023.

Global network marketing company Atomy has chosen The Marianas as the reward vacation destination for its top-performing employees.

Atomy was established in 2009 and had direct selling operations in 27 regions worldwide as of last December, including South Korea. The first team of 68 company winners arrived on Tuesday (Sept. 19) and the second team of 72 visitors visited from Sept. 20-23, 2023.

"We warmly welcome Atomy to The Marianas and congratulate their employees who are being recognized for high sales performance. We're excited to have them on island," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "Under the MVA's MICE Support Program we continue to encourage group travel like last week's visit by Atomy, in partnership with our travel agent partners."

The group tour is coordinated by Yellow Balloon Tour, and a total of 268 visitors are expected. An additional 128 members of the reward vacation will be in Saipan on Oct. 31-Nov. 3, 2023. The vacation—originating in Seoul—includes a tour of Managaha and plenty of free time for the winners to explore Saipan. ***(PR)***

USCIS exempts form I-539 biometric services fee for all applicants

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced the exemption of the biometric services fee as part of the application requirements for Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status, beginning Oct. 1.

On April 19, USCIS announced that the agency was extending temporary suspension of the biometrics submission requirements for certain applicants filing Form I-539 until Sept. 30. USCIS also announced plans to remove the requirement for all I-539 applicants.

Policy highlights

■ Beginning Oct. 1, we are exempting the $85 biometric services fee as part of the application process for Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status.

■ Applicants do not need to pay the fee if their application is postmarked Oct. 1 or later. However, certain applicants who file Form I-539 prior to Oct. 1 will still be scheduled for an ASC appointment and should still attend.

■ In most cases, applicants will not be scheduled to attend a biometric services appointment. However, if USCIS determines that biometrics are required, the applicant will receive a notice with information about appearing for their biometric services appointment.

■ If an applicant mistakenly submits the biometric services fee and the payment is submitted separately from the Form I-539 fee, we will return the biometric services fee and accept the Form I-539.

■ If an applicant mistakenly submits the biometric services fee and the payment is combined with a paper-based Form I-539 filing fee, this is considered an incorrect filing and we will reject the Form I-539.

■ If an applicant mistakenly authorizes a credit card payment that combines the biometric services fee with the application fee, we will accept the application and only charge the application fee.

More information

For additional information on this announcement, please visit our Form I-539 webpage. For more information on USCIS programs, please visit uscis.gov or follow us on Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and LinkedIn. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 |
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

NOTICE OF INVITATION FOR BID ADVERTISING CONCESSION AT THE FRANCISCO MANGLONA BORJA/TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Project No.: CPA-IFB-005-23
CPA Concession No.: TAD-2023-01-02

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (the "CPA") is accepting sealed bids, subject to the terms and conditions of the Invitation for Bid (the "IFB"), and other contract provisions, for bids from firms, companies, and/or corporations for Advertising Opportunities at the Francisco Manglona Borja/Tinian International Airport.

The IFB will be issued and available for pick-up beginning September 27, 2023, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, at the Administration Office, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport or at the CPA Office located at the Francisco Manglona Borja/ Tinian International Airport. CPA offices are closed every other Monday beginning Monday, October 2, 2023 for austerity reasons and also on holidays. The IFB includes layouts of the advertisement area and other requirements. All responses to this IFB shall also take into account any and/or all costs that will be charged to the bidder awarded the contract for the project. Prospective bidders will be required to pay an administrative fee of $100.00 for costs associated with handling and consideration of the bid.

Questions and/or clarification concerning this project shall be in writing and sent to the attention of the Tinian Port Manager, Antonio L. Borja through email at alborja@cnmiports.com with copy to Joy Ann Tenorio at joy.tenorio@cnmiports.com no later than October 11, 2023.

All bids shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "INVITATION FOR BID SUBMISSION: CONFIDENTIAL, ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY CPA-IFB-005-23." One (1) original and two (2) copies of the bid must be submitted no later than 2:00 p.m. Chamorro Standard Time, October 31, 2023, to the Authority Administration Section, Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport.

Bids will be opened on October 31, 2023, at 3:00p.m. at the Commonwealth Ports Authority Meeting Room, Saipan International Airport. Bids are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee. The concessions are for the right to advertise at certain designated locations within the Francisco Manglona Borja/Tinian International Airport for a period of two (2) years and requires the concessionaire to operate such concession to the satisfaction of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so, would be in CPA's best interest. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest. All bids shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

9/25/2023
Date

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB23-OGM-42300107

SUBMISSION DATE: OCTOBER 20, 2023 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) LIGHT RESCUE UTILITY TRUCK FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY, SAIPAN"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPTIOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARINGHOUSE BY OCTOBER 06, 2023 TO MR. EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA JR, VIA EMAIL AT epi.cabrera@gov.mp

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OGM

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA)
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E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

NOTICE OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING

The Commonwealth Ports Authority hereby gives notice that there will be a special Personnel Committee Meeting on Thursday, September 28, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room located on the first floor of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport on Saipan. The following items are on the agenda for the above-referenced meeting:

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE AGENDA

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda

II. Public Comments

III. Special Meeting Agenda
1. Executive Management Positions

IV. Executive Session
1. Personnel Ad Hoc Search Committee Report and Recommendations for Executive Director

V. Miscellaneous/Announcements

VI. Adjournment

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. A time limit may be imposed. Video Conferencing is also available via Zoom. Zoom link: Meeting ID: 898 0318 0837 Passcode: 573227

Joseph M. Diaz
Personnel Affairs Chair

CPA

The Commonwealth Ports Authority, led by board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds, and Tinian Municipality officials, led my Tinian Mayor Edwin P. Aldan, lead the ribbon cutting ceremony of Tinian Airport Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Building Renovations project.

CPA completes $4.5M Tinian ARFF Building Renovations project

CPA

CPA board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds makes her remarks during the ribbon cutting ceremony.

CPA

The before photo of the Tinian Airport Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Building.

CPA

The after photo of the Tinian Airport Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Building.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has successfully completed its Tinian Airport Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Building Renovations project, which was made possible through funding from the Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Improvement Program. This significant milestone was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony last Sept. 8 that underscored the importance of enhancing safety and operational capabilities at the Francisco Manglona Borja/Tinian International Airport.

The ARFF Building Renovations project represents a major transformation of the ARFF station at TNI. The scope of this project was extensive, involving the construction of a modern three-story building dedicated to ARFF personnel and their operations.

CPA

The total cost of the ARFF Building Renovations project amounted to $4.5 million.

Among the key highlights of this renovated facility are a dedicated backup water tank to ensure a reliable water supply for firefighting operations, a state-of-the-art fire protection system to bolster safety measures, a fully equipped gym to support the well-being and fitness of ARFF personnel, and an elevator to enhance accessibility within the building. The facility also includes 3.5 lavatories, a modern kitchen, and living quarters.

Other features include a fire pole, a conference room, office spaces, upgraded bay doors, and an expanded Bay 3 to accommodate additional ARFF vehicles and equipment. Additionally, an ancillary building has been constructed, housing a self-contained breathing apparatus room, storage facilities, a wash-down area, and a mechanical room.

The successful completion of this project was the result of collaborative efforts from several key partners. The A&E Designer for this project was Pacific Engineering Group & Services; the Construction Manager was Hofschneider Engineering Corporation; and the Construction Contractor was Hong Ye Construction.

"The Commonwealth Ports Authority extends its heartfelt appreciation to its partners and the FAA for making this project a reality," said CPA Executive Director Christopher S. Tenorio. "These renovations will not only elevate the capabilities of our dedicated ARFF personnel, but they will also significantly contribute to the overall safety and security of the airport."

The total cost of the ARFF Building Renovations project amounted to $4.5 million. ***(PR)***

UOG SHRM student chapter receives outstanding student chapter award

UOG

The University of Guam Society for Human Resource Management members are seen with their advisor at the Fanuchånan 2022 Mock Job Far. Front row, from left, Kolbric Diego; Denzyl Mariei Ngiralmau; Dr. Joann CE Diego, Advisor; Jamie Freita, Alvin Yambao. Back row, from left, Napu Aguon,

The Society for Human Resource Management recognized the University of Guam SHRM student chapter with the Outstanding Student Chapter Award on September 13 for providing superior growth and development opportunities to its student members.

"Outstanding commitment to growth and excellence has earned (UOG SHRM) the prestigious Outstanding Student Chapter Award for the Academic Year 2022-2023," said Beatriz Arcilla, a UOG Business Administration alumna and UOG SHRM Fañomnåkan 2023 President.

The SHRM Student Chapter Merit Award program encourages the development of more effective student chapters and distinguishes outstanding activities and projects.

"It's a true testament of the dedication and passion of our officers, members, advisors and mentors. This award belongs to the entire team, and I'm excited to see what UOG SHRM can achieve together and continue to earn this prestigious award year after year," said Jamie Freitas, a UOG Business Administration alumna and UOG SHRM Fanuchånan 2022 president.

Since its inception in 1996-1997, the UOG SHRM student chapter has received other merit awards through its active participation in the UOG community and HR activities beyond the campus. UOG SHRM's latest award is for activities between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023.

Dr. Richard S. Colfax, UOG SHRM co-advisor and emeritus professor, said the student award is comparable to the Pinnacle Award for the professional chapter.

"It is a testament to the efforts and commitment that UOG's SHRM students, advisor and the HR program continue to make," Dr. Colfax said. "Our regional and local businesses will benefit from the learning, accomplishments and experiences that these future Human Resource professionals are gaining through UOG's Human Resource Management program and studies."

The student chapter's activities included organizing events such as the Mock Job Fair and the SHRM Thrive Wellness Fair.

"This achievement is a testament to the dedication of our members and commitment to maintaining a healthy and thriving chapter," said Dr. Joann CE Diego, UOG SHRM advisor and assistant professor in Human Resources Management.

For more information about UOG SHRM, contact: Dr. Joanne Diego, assistant professor of HRM & UOG SHRM advisor School of Business and Public Administration, University of Guam, (671) 735-2501 or email: joanndiego@triton.uog.edu. ***(PR)***

UOG master's program for future CPAs open for next set of applicants

UOG

From left, Martha Suez-Sales, chairperson of the Master of Accountancy program at the University of Guam School of Business and Public Administration; Dr. Doreen T. Crisostomo-Muña, professor of accounting; and SBPA dean Roseann Jones gather for a photo on campus on Sept. 8, 2022 for the launch of the first MAcc cohort.

The Master of Accountancy program at the University of Guam's School of Business and Public Administration is open for its second batch of applicants.

The program provides recent accounting graduates and working accounting professionals from across the Micronesia region and beyond the opportunity to advance their careers toward becoming a Certified Public Accountant.

In this fully online degree program, students will be part of a one-year cohort, taking two courses at a time over five eight-week terms.

The application period is ongoing and continues through October 31, 2023.

The first batch of students in the MAcc Program has shown that going for graduate school while keeping a full-time job is achievable.

"All students in this cohort are working full time," said Dr. Martha Suez-Sales, program chairman.

"There's a good range of students' experience, from seasoned professionals with 20-plus years of experience, to recent graduates working in public accounting, private, and government sectors. These diverse backgrounds create an enriching learning environment both inside and outside the classroom."

The program's fully online feature makes it open to accounting students from beyond Guam. In the first cohort, one student is from Saipan.

Suez-Sales said the diverse professional backgrounds of the students in the program create an enriching learning environment.

"Students benefit from each other's varied experiences, leading to a more comprehensive learning practice," Suez-Sales said. "Students' full-time employment compliments their learning process. By being able to apply what they learn directly in their workplaces, they can enhance their understanding and gain practical experience."

To learn more about the MAcc program, go to the link below.

https://landing.uog.edu/master-of-accountancy. ***(PR)***

USDA invests $70M to expand conservation assistance to underserved producers

HONOLULU—The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing $70 million in partnerships that will improve outreach to underserved producers and communities to expand access to conservation assistance, including programs funded by the Inflation Reduction Act, as well as career opportunities. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced the selection of 139 projects, two of which are in Hawai'i, with entities for a one- to three-year engagement that encourage participation in NRCS programs, especially in underserved communities and among urban and small-scale producers. Projects will extend outreach to producers who are beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, and veterans, and will highlight opportunities for students to pursue careers in agriculture, natural resources and related sciences.

"USDA is committed to removing barriers for underserved producers to all USDA services. The projects selected under the Equity in Conservation Outreach Cooperative Agreements will partner with NRCS to better ensure underserved producers receive the benefits our conservation programs deliver, including those oversubscribed programs that received a boost of funding from the Inflation Reduction Act," said NRCS Chief Terry Cosby. "NRCS is investing in continued support of community-based organizations and partners that are instrumental in supporting conservation outreach to underserved producers and underserved communities."

The Equity in Conservation Outreach Cooperative Agreements include projects that:

- Promote the benefits of NRCS programs through education or demonstration of conservation practices.
- Develop community conservation partnerships that engage underserved producers to plan and protect farmland ecosystems, watersheds and wildlife habitat in underserved communities.
- Inform small-scale or urban agriculture producers about opportunities to participate in conservation programs.
- Support education on, planning for and adoption of climate-smart conservation practices.

Projects will reach underserved groups through a combination of program outreach and technical assistance in one or more of the following five NRCS priority areas:

- Addressing local natural resource issues.
- Promoting conservation career opportunities.
- Expanding adoption of climate-smart conservation.
- Encouraging conservation in small-scale and urban agriculture.
- Developing conservation leadership skills and opportunities.

Selected projects include:

- Ho'olako Agriculture Consulting Agriculture Consulting aims to help Kahikinui Hawaiian Homestead remediate the soil in this Southwestern region of Maui through rotational grazing methodology. The hydrophobic soil and wild animals have made impossibility to grow food, and the dry region is highly susceptible to fir. Building the soils will improve food security and mitigate the risk of fire. Award Amount: $100,000.
- Wai'anae Community Redevelopment Corporation is a community-based initiative that aims to engage and inspire all youth, especially those from unserved communities, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander traditions of aloha inā (place-based resource stewardship). The project seeks to fosters diversity, equity and inclusivity while empowering leadership for a sustainable and resilient community farming, food and agriculture system. The initiative will provide education-to-workforce opportunities, with the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden leading the project. Award Amount: $697,000.

Program impacts

The selected projects build on NRCS' fiscal year 2022 investment of $50 million in more than 100 partnerships to expand access to conservation assistance for climate-smart agriculture and forestry. The fiscal year 2022 investment is supporting efforts in 44 states and territories.

Underserved producers include beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers and ranchers, as well as other underrepresented or disadvantaged communities.

Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is engaged in a whole-of-government effort to combat the climate crisis and conserve and protect our nation's lands, biodiversity and natural resources including our soil, air and water. Through conservation practices and partnerships, USDA aims to enhance economic growth and create new streams of income for farmers, ranchers, producers and private foresters. Successfully meeting these challenges will require USDA and our agencies to pursue a coordinated approach alongside USDA stakeholders, including State, local and Tribal governments.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit usda.gov. ***(PR)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Here's how Medicare should negotiate drug prices

The Inflation Reduction Act, passed last year, gave Medicare the authority to negotiate drug prices for the first time. The government will start with 10 medications, which were announced last month. Now it just needs to figure out how much they should cost.

When Congress created Medicare's prescription-drug benefit in 2003, it prevented the government from haggling with drugmakers—a coup for the industry. Medicare's new powers are forecast to reduce out-of-pocket costs for seniors and save nearly $100 billion over a decade. For consumers accustomed to paying the highest drug prices in the world, that's unequivocally good news.

Yet the government needs to strike a careful balance. The goal should be to push prices down while preserving incentives to develop new and better treatments. With this in mind, the law directs Medicare to find the "lowest maximum fair price" while "appropriately rewarding innovation."

Officials have spent months laying out in painstaking detail how the negotiations will proceed. Nowhere do they explain how Medicare will come up with a "fair price."

Many other countries have solved this dilemma using what's called cost-effectiveness analysis, a quantitative method applied regularly within in the pharmaceutical industry and by government negotiators to determine how much a drug should cost. Cost-effectiveness seeks to weigh the health benefits of a treatment against its price. It can help health officials with limited resources answer difficult questions such as how much a vaccine should cost during a pandemic, or whether a new Alzheimer's treatment is worth its $26,500 price tag. For the coming negotiations, it would determine if a drug delivers sufficient health benefits for seniors while offering taxpayers good value for their money.

One might think such an objective would be central to the IRA. In fact, the law explicitly bans the most common cost-effectiveness metric—so-called quality-adjusted life years, or QALYs—from negotiations. Certain interest groups had complained that QALYs discriminate against people with long-term illnesses or disabilities (on the dubious rationale that "sick" years are assigned lower scores than "healthy" ones). The pharmaceutical industry, for its part, doesn't like the government using QALYs to meddle in the business of pricing drugs. Most other markets don't need regulators armed with formulas to determine how much products should cost, the argument goes.

Yet the prescription-drug market is different. Patients and providers don't make decisions about whether a treatment offers good value — middlemen do. These intermediaries, which design prescription-drug coverage and negotiate discounts for health plans, get bigger fees for more expensive medications.

As a result, payers like Medicare can't be sure they're getting a good deal. Other countries including Australia and the U.K. don't have such middlemen because a single negotiator—the government—can press manufacturers for discounts. They regularly use cost-effectiveness assessments and, unsurprisingly, their prescription-drug spending is a fraction the U.S.'s.

Unfortunately, the process for Medicare won't be so straight-

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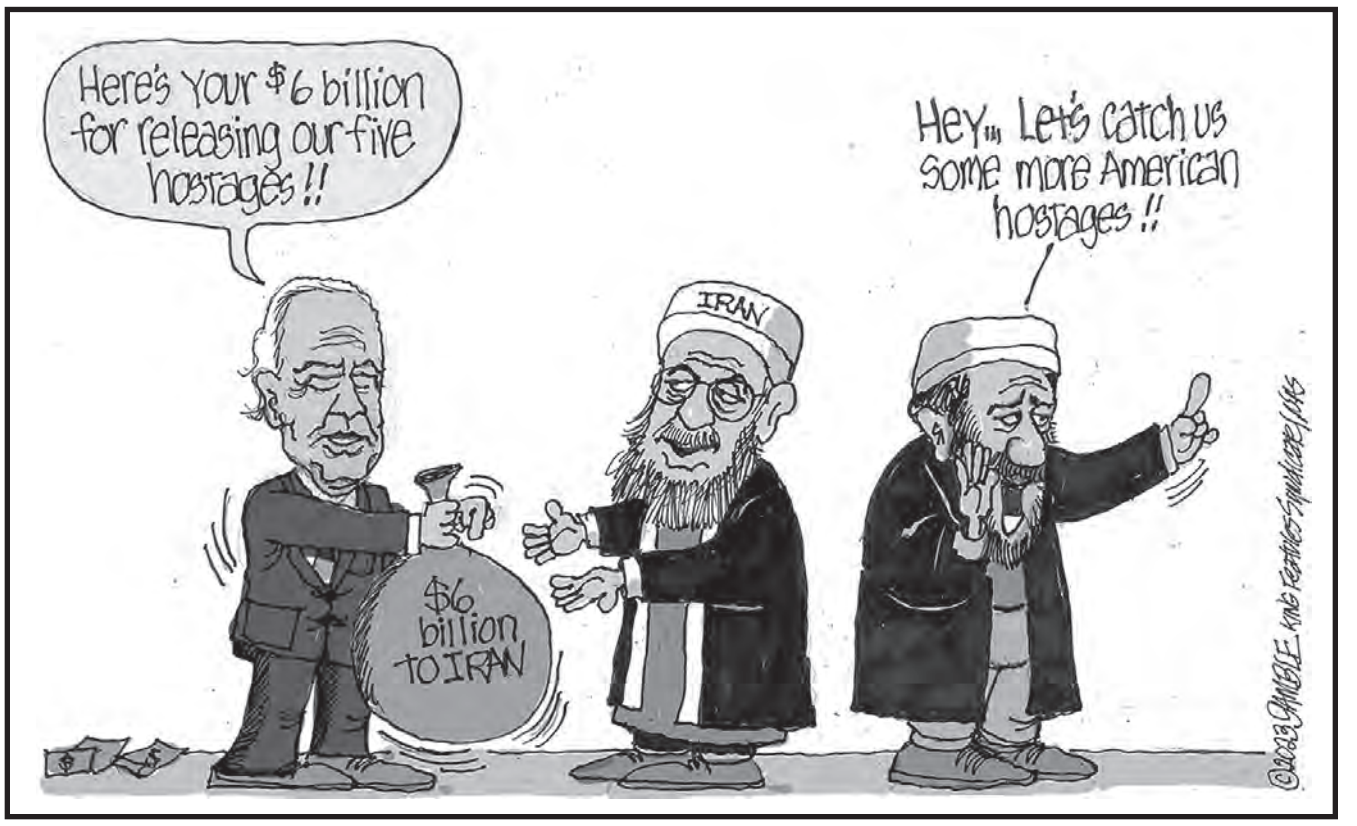
Here's your $6 billion for releasing our five hostages!!
Hey... Let's catch us some more American hostages!!
IRAN
$6 billion TO IRAN
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Trump has a second-term agenda, and it's more terrifying than ever

By DOYLE MCMANUS
Los Angeles Times

Doyle McManus is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times.

WASHINGTON—Former President Donald Trump is on the campaign trail again, and most of the attention he's getting is for bare-knuckled attacks on his chief opponents, President Biden (whom he derides as "Crooked Joe") and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis ("DeSanctimonious"), as well as the prosecutors who have indicted him ("fascist thugs").

Amid the insults, Trump has laid out a menu of actions he plans to take if he becomes president again. Anyone who isn't a true believer in Trump's authoritarian vision should be terrified.

In speeches, interviews and campaign videos, Trump has promised to:

- Use the military to participate in the largest deportation of undocumented immigrants in American history;
- Order the National Guard into cities with high crime rates, whether local officials want it or not;
- Prosecute Californians who protect minors coming to the state for gender-affirming care;
- Impose a 10% tariff on almost all foreign goods, increasing prices for consumers;
- Appoint a special prosecutor to "go after" his political opponents, beginning with Biden;
- Purge the federal civil service of anyone who questions his views.

Some of those pledges may turn out to be illegal or impractical, but they're more than bluster.

Most of them reflect views Trump has held for decades; he'll try to act on them even if laws and judges get in his way.

Some promises, like mass deportations, are reruns from his first-term agenda—only this time, he and his aides know how to fulfill them under an expansive view of federal authority.

Here's a preview of the second Trump administration, based mostly on the candidate's own words:

Immigration

Just as he did in 2016, Trump has promised to launch "the largest domestic deportation operation in American history" against an estimated 11 million immigrants without legal status, using military units as well as civilian agencies.

As he did in 2016, he's using racially coded language.

"They're criminals, people from mental institutions, terrorists," he said at a rally in Iowa last week.

"It's not just countries adjoining us," he told conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt. "They're coming from all over Africa. They're coming from areas of the world that nobody can believe. ... and they're destroying our country."

Trump has also said he wants to revive the family separation policy he imposed during his first term until public outcry forced him to reverse it.

And he has promised to sign an executive order "on Day One" to end birthright citizenship for children of immigrants without legal standing.

All of these actions would almost surely draw legal challenges, but a determined president could probably get some of them to stick.

National Guard

Trump has also revived a proposal he made during the summer of unrest in 2020: "In cities where there has been a complete breakdown of public safety, I will send in federal assets including the National Guard until law and order is restored."

The federal Insurrection Act gives the president authority to use troops to quell civil disturbances, whether local officials want them to or not. President Dwight D. Eisenhower used the provision to send the National Guard to Little Rock, Ark., to protect school desegregation efforts in 1957.

Transgender care

Trump has said he will ask Congress to pass a federal ban against gender reassignment surgery for minors, a priority he called "probably No. 1" on his list. Until then, he says, he will use executive action to restrict the practice.

He says he will ban federal funding for gender transitions at any age and bar hospitals and doctors that provide reassignment surgery to minors from participating in Medicare or Medicaid.

At a meeting with religious conservatives this month, he denounced the 2022 California law that prohibits healthcare providers from releasing information about a minor's gender-related medical care to authorities in another state.

"We will prosecute those involved in this sick California scheme for violating federal laws against kidnapping, sex trafficking [and] child abuse," Trump said.

As president, Trump could presumably direct the FBI to investigate healthcare providers who refuse to respond to inquiries from other states. Prosecuting them for sex trafficking or child abuse sounds like a stretch, even for Trump.

Tariffs and taxes

Trump has always called himself "a tariff man," convinced that taxes on imports will strengthen the economy. That hasn't changed.

He says he wants to impose a 10% tariff on all foreign goods, another rerun from his 2016 campaign. Federal law gives the president wide authority to impose tariffs.

Most economists, including conservatives, say it's a terrible idea, partly because it would fuel inflation by raising prices. The nonpartisan Tax Foundation estimated that a 10% tariff would be equivalent to a $300-billion tax on consumers, since the cost of tariffs is absorbed by buyers, not sellers.

Trump also wants to cut corporate taxes again, but that would

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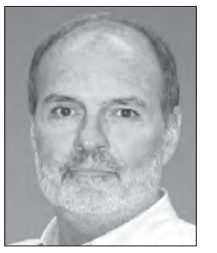
Capital punishment: 2 choices for America



By JOHN M. CRISP
Tribune News Service

John M. Crisp, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, lives in Texas and can be reached at jcrispcolumns@gmail.com.

You wouldn't think that it would be that hard to kill someone.

History indicates that we've always been good at it. It took only one generation before Cain killed Abel in a fit of jealousy over divine approbation. Murder had been invented and we've never looked back.

In fact, we've only gotten better at killing. Cain must have used a club or rock on Abel, but in modern times our killing capacity has gone ballistic—literally. We've invented powerful and efficient firearms that push the annual death toll in America to near 50,000 victims.

But if we're so good at killing, why are the states that still use capital punishment having such a hard time putting people to death?

We have a term for it—botched executions—and it's not hard to find examples.

Sometimes prison officials are unable to properly insert needles into the veins of the condemned. In 2018, an Alabama execution team searched for nearly three hours for a vein in Doyle Hamm's body. It had to give up before Hamm's death warrant expired but not before puncturing him at least 11 times in his arms, ankles, legs and groin.

Sometimes mistakes are made: In 2015, Charles Warner took 18 minutes to die after Oklahoma officials used the wrong drug. Warner's last words: "My body is on fire."

Sometimes nearly everything goes wrong. In 2014, Oklahoma officials worked for 51 minutes to find a suitable vein in Clayton Lockett's arms, legs, feet and groin. After the lethal drugs were administered Lockett reportedly regained consciousness, writhed in pain, moaned and struggled before he finally died.

If I described the crimes of Hamm, Warner and Lockett, any compassion you might feel for them could dissipate. You might argue that they deserve any suffering the state happens to administer. But there are two problems with that view:

First, the Constitution proscribes punishment that is cruel and unusual. Whatever those terms mean, we can't administer punishments that don't pass that test.

Second, even if the Constitution didn't prohibit cruel punishments, whether or not we use them says a lot about who we are.

In America capital punishment resides in an ambiguous no-man's land between citizens who think that putting anyone to death is cruel and inhumane, no matter how unspeakable his crimes, and other citizens who believe that the power of the state must be backed up by the threat of death for the purposes of punishment, retribution and deterrence.

Our ambivalence about capital punishment has put us in an awkward place: We continue to use it, but our attempts to make it more palatable have been largely unsuccessful.

The last public execution in America occurred in Owensboro, Kentucky, in 1936. After a three-hour trial and four and a half minutes of jury deliberation, Rainey Bethea, a 26-year-old Black man, was convicted of rape and sentenced to be hanged. A crowd of 20,000 traveled to Owensboro, filling up the hotels and camping near the gallows, enjoying picnics and alcohol. Reportedly, at times things got rowdy.

But once the trap dropped, Bethea was dead and 20,000 were eyewitnesses to American justice at work.

Which suggests two alternatives for resolving the dilemma of capital punishment:

First, let's not quibble over methods of execution. Lethal injection appears to be more about our feelings than about concern for the condemned, and the evidence that it's more humane than, say, a firing squad is sketchy.

Further, there's a brutal honesty about public executions; they provide a stark confrontation with the consequences of the laws we enact. I predict a media goldmine: pay-per-view, The Execution Channel, capital punishment parties.

On the other hand, we could abolish capital punishment, as all other developed Western countries have done. There's little evidence that it deters crime, our attempts to sanitize it are largely unsuccessful and it's inevitable that sometimes we execute innocent people.

Ultimately, however, capital punishment isn't about what criminals deserve; it's about who we are.

Either we live in a country that's willing to use state power to execute its citizens, even if brutal and inhumane measures are required. Or we don't. There's no middle ground.

HERE'S

From page 8

forward. With QALYs banned, it will need to use other (less tested) methodologies. Even so, effective alternatives exist, including some that have been developed to minimize the disparities that disability advocates cite. Medicare should embrace these metrics and be transparent with the public about its pricing methods. A quantitative framework is the clearest, most predictable way to achieve the IRA's goals, not least because it rewards innovation by giving high marks to expensive yet very effective drugs.

It could also minimize rising legal objections to the concept of a "fair price." The provision to negotiate drug prices could be one of the most valuable parts of the IRA, but it will only work if drugmakers and taxpayers trust the results.

A more data-driven, transparent process is critical to making that happen.

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Republicans now want to investigate tax-exempt groups, just not their own

By KURT BARDELLA
Los Angeles Times

Kurt Bardella is a Democratic strategist and a former senior advisor for Republicans on the House Oversight Committee.

"Americans don't want to live in a nation where big government has the power to silence free speech." These are the words of House Ways and Means Chairman Jason Smith, who recently began an inquiry into tax-exempt philanthropic and advocacy organizations.

I was surprised to see this effort from a Republican-led committee, since conservatives have often opposed government scrutiny of tax-exempt organizations and transparency in campaign finance systems. My former colleagues at the House Oversight Committee, for instance, launched a major investigation into the Obama administration for "targeting" conservative tax-exempt organizations.

The current black-box campaign finance system is, of course, the brainchild of conservatives. The Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United decision was the product of a conservative campaign to roll back campaign finance regulations and opened the door to untraceable spending in elections.

Since then, 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) nonprofit groups, which can spend money advocating on policy and don't have to disclose their donors, have taken on central roles in the political landscape. In fact, according to the research group OpenSecrets, organizations on the left and right that don't have to disclose their donors spent $963 million in elections in the decade after Citizens United, dwarfing the $129 million spent over the previous decade.

House Republicans claim to be concerned about this growing influence, but only when it is in support of progressive causes. For all the energy Republicans have spent decrying the weaponization of the government to attack political opponents, Rep. Smith of Missouri appears to be doing exactly that. Until now, Republicans have vigorously blocked every campaign finance reform effort over the last decade and voted unanimously to block the Democratic-led Disclose Act last year, which would have provided some transparency.

House Republicans, however, lined up behind their American Confidence in Elections Act, a laundry list of election changes that would make voting harder—and, yes, make dark money spending easier. They say dark money on the left is a problem, and yet they're pushing legislation that would eliminate many of the few disclosure requirements that still exist.

Smith and the committee also claim that nonprofits are becoming conduits for "foreign influence," citing misleading xenophobic reports from right-wing media to make their case. But Republicans have minimized and downright denied Russian interference in our elections for years despite bipartisan findings that Russia organized an aggressive campaign to influence the 2016 elections.

Republicans are also ignoring foreign-owned and foreign-influenced corporations pumping money into our elections. Look no further than Rudolph W. Giuliani's business associate Lev Parnas, who was recently sentenced to 20 months in prison for using a shell company to funnel Russian oligarch money into American elections.

There's a lot of outrage about the political activities of progressive nonprofits, but Smith's committee seems to have no desire to look into conservative nonprofits such as Turning Point USA, which helped fund the rally before the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot, or the Public Interest Legal Foundation, whose leaders were involved in disputing the results of the 2020 election.

Dozens of conservative nonprofits, including the Honest Elections Project, led by Leonard Leo, co-chair of the Federalist Society, work to restrict voting rights, with great harm inflicted on voters of color. I can think of nothing more wrong than using tax-exempt groups to spread the "Big Lie," suppress voting rights or fuel an assault on the U.S. Capitol, yet that does not seem to be a concern for House Republicans. (Leo is reportedly under investigation for allegedly misusing his web of nonprofits to enrich himself; it would be surprising if Republicans decided to examine his case.)

There's more that the Internal Revenue Service should do to ensure that tax-exempt organizations are following the laws. But Republicans have refused to give the IRS the resources it needs to conduct proper oversight of nonprofit organizations and even voted to rescind more than $80 billion in IRS funding this year. Yet they're eager to investigate progressive groups when the biggest abuses are coming from their own camp.

TRUMP

From page 8

require legislation from Congress. He has not proposed any new tax cuts for individuals.

Prosecutions

Trump could certainly appoint a pliant attorney general and federal prosecutors who would investigate his political opponents.

"I will appoint a real special 'prosecutor' to go after the most corrupt president in the history of the USA, Joe Biden, the entire Biden crime family, & all others involved with the destruction of our elections, borders, & country itself!" he wrote in a social media post after he was arraigned on charges that he illegally retained classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate.

If he carries out that threat, it would represent a politicization of the Justice Department unmatched since the Watergate scandal half a century ago.

Many of Trump's promises sound familiar, since they resemble actions he attempted to take in his first term. But there would be two important differences this time around.

In his first term, Trump initially surrounded himself with aides who sought to temper his impulses: White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly, Defense Secretary James N. Mattis—even, occasionally, Attorney General Jeff Sessions. Those moderating influences are gone.

"When I went there, I didn't know a lot of people; I had to rely on, in some cases, RINOs," Trump said earlier this year, referring to "Republicans in Name Only." Now "I know the good ones; I know the bad ones," he said.

In 2017, Trump arrived in the White House unprepared, with no clear idea of how to force the federal bureaucracy to turn his whims into action. If he wins this time, he'll bring a team of loyal aides who have been planning their return to power for months, and who intend to start by purging bureaucrats who stand in their way.

"Trump 2.0 would be the Delta variant of democracy," David Axelrod, the former campaign strategist for President Obama, said last week. "It would be a thousand times more virulent and harder to control."

After four chaotic years in office followed by four years of simmering-rage exile, we should know better than to think Trump will change his ways now.

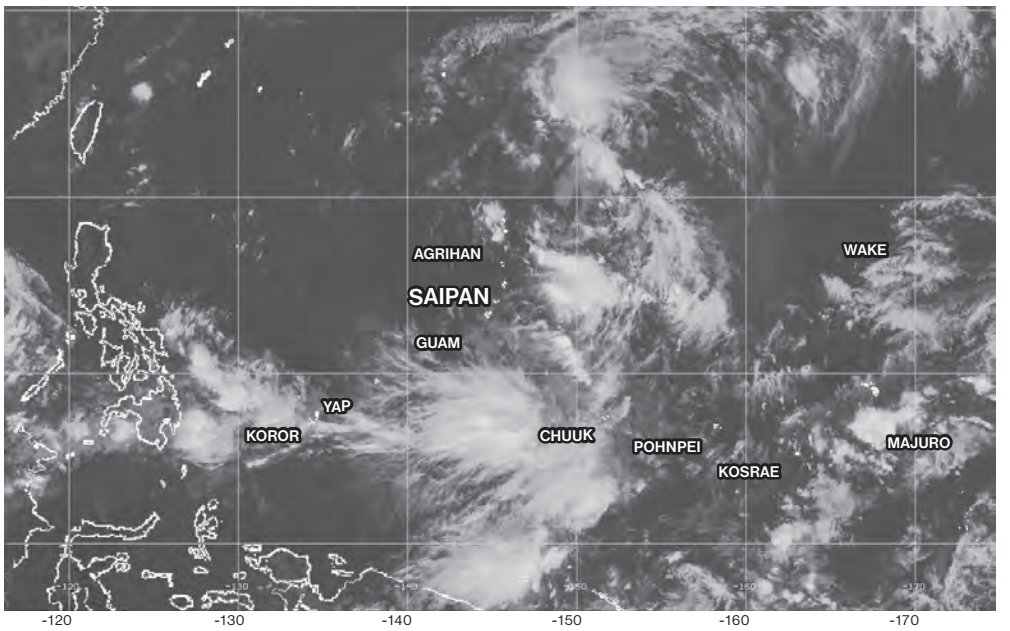
Don't say he never warned you.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Cloudy with numerous showers and scattered thunderstorms. Southwest winds 10 to 15 mph.	Cloudy with showers likely and a slight chance of thunderstorms. South winds 10 to 15 mph.	Cloudy with showers likely and a slight chance of thunderstorms. South winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.
86° 78°	86° 78°	86° 78°	86° 77°	86° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:47 AM, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Guam Doppler weather radar shows isolated showers moving through the Marianas Waters this morning. The Ipan buoy reveals a 2 to 3 foot east-northeast swell, which computer wave model guidance suggests a 2 to 4 foot west-southwest swell. Adding in wind waves, this gives total combined seas of 4 to 6 feet, which will continue most of this week.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	85° / 78°
Palau	Thunderstorm	84° / 79°
Yap	Thunderstorm	86° / 80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	88° / 78°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	88° / 77°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	86° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:06 AM	6:09 PM
Thursday	6:06 AM	6:09 PM
Friday	6:06 AM	6:08 PM
Saturday	6:06 AM	6:07 PM
Sunday	6:06 AM	6:06 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	3:34 AM	4:39 PM
Thursday	-	4:36 AM	5:24 PM
Friday	-	5:36 AM	6:06 PM
Saturday	-	6:35 AM	6:48 PM
Sunday	-	7:33 AM	7:31 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Rain	61° / 52°
Beijing	Sunny	88° / 57°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	88° / 79°
Honolulu	Showers	88° / 77°
London	Rain	64° / 61°
Los Angeles	Sunny	82° / 64°
Manila	Thunderstorm	88° / 77°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	59° / 45°
Miami	Thunderstorm	85° / 77°
New York	Partly Cloudy	84° / 68°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	81° / 64°
Paris	Showers	70° / 63°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	77° / 64°
Rome	Thunderstorm	79° / 64°
Salem	Mostly Sunny	93° / 67°
San Francisco	Sunny	73° / 60°
Seoul	Sunny	77° / 57°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	75° / 63°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	89° / 67°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
4:49 AM	High Tide	1.86
11:53 AM	Low Tide	-0.15
6:44 PM	High Tide	2.00
-	-	-

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1 up to Sep 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
PR 111	7:05AM	9:05AM	7
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily up to Sep 4
UA183	7:20PM	9:10PM	Daily from Sep 5

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1 up to Sep 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
PR110	11:40PM	5:35AM+1	6
UA184	11:50PM	5:50AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ702/625	12:05PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Gene's Barber & Beauty Shop welcomes 4 new staff

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Gene's Barber & Beauty Shop now has its full complement of staff with the recent arrival of two new barbers and two new beauticians.

Owner Boy Ching said Jefferson "Jeff" Macapagal and Leovigildo "Leo" Obosa recently joined one of Saipan's oldest barbershops, while Danielle "Elle" Perez and Marjorie "Marj" Triste are the new all-around beauticians of Gene's Beauty Shop.

Macapagal comes to Saipan with 25 years' experience at Headway of Mall of Asia in the Philippines, while before accepting Gene's Barbershop job, Obosa worked as a barber in Qatar.

The two join the barbershop's resident greybeard, Roland Calling, who has been with Gene's Barbershops since 1991.

Ching said with three barbers now on board, his business can fully take on the haircut requirements of the men on island.

"Barbers' haircut for men are distinctive and their cuts and styling are more manly than in a beauty salon. Another service that the barbershop can offer is beard and mustache shaving. It may be a clean shave or a trim shave, which a salon is not capable of doing. After a haircut, a barber usually performs a brief extra neck and shoulder massage as additional service," he said.

A fourth barber is enroute as Ismael Acob, which has five years' experience at Bruno's Barber in Fairview, Philippines, is expected to be on island soon.

As for Perez and Triste, the former's expertise is hairstyling, makeup, manicure and pedicure, nail extensions, eyebrow micro blading, and eyelashes extension, while the latter is known for his face massage and face cleaning as well as eyebrow micro blading, manicure and pedicure, nail extensions, foot spa, eyelashes extension, and makeup.

MARK RABAGO

Gene's Barber Shop's new barbers Jefferson "Jeff" Macapagal, left, and Leovigildo "Leo" Obosa sandwich Roland Calling who's been working at the Garapan barbershop since 1991.

MARK RABAGO

All-around beautician Shine Vizcarra, left, teaches newcomer Danielle "Elle" Perez the ropes.

MARK RABAGO

Gene's Barber & Beauty Shop is located across the Mobil gas station along Middle Road in Garapan.

Aside from the usual haircut and hairstyling, the two are also very capable of performing hair color/dye and dry scalp treatments.

They join Shine Vizcarra, who has worked at Gene's Beauty Shop for the past four years. Before arriving on Saipan, Vizcarra plied her trade at Azanzy Beauty Shop in Alabang and Hair Couture in Bacoor, Cavite, both in the Philippines

Ching admitted that before welcoming Macapagal, Obosa, Perez, and Triste, Gene's Barbershop and Beauty Shop was essentially down to a one-barber and one-beautician operation.

"We are glad to be of full service once again. Our clients can always expect the continuity of service with the always ever-present courtesy, hospitality, and expertise that Gene's Barber and Beauty Shop have previously rendered," he said.

Gene's Barber Shop is the pioneer barbershop on Saipan having been established in the 1980s. It's named after the original owner, Generoso, who passed away in the early 2010s. Ching bought the business from his widow.

Gene's Barber & Beauty Shop is located across the Mobil gas station along Middle Road in Garapan. It's open from Monday to Sunday, 8:30am-6:30pm. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (670) 233-6300.

Biden admin announces $1.4B to improve rail safety and boost capacity in 35 states

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration announced Monday that it has awarded more than $1.4 billion to projects that improve railway safety and boost capacity, with roughly $1 billion of the money coming from the 2021 infrastructure law.

"These projects will make American rail safer, more reliable, and more resilient, delivering tangible benefits to dozens of communities where railroads are located, and strengthening supply chains for the entire country," Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said in a statement.

The money is funding 70 projects in 35 states and Washington, D.C. Railroad safety has become a key concern nationwide ever since a train carrying hazardous chemicals derailed and caught fire in East Palestine, Ohio, in February. President Joe Biden has ordered federal agencies to hold the train's operator Norfolk Southern accountable for the crash, but a package of proposed rail safety reforms has stalled in the Senate where the bill is still awaiting a vote. The White House is also saying that a possible government shutdown because of House Republicans would undermine railway safety.

The projects include track upgrades and bridge repairs, in addition to improving the connectivity among railways and making routes less vulnerable to extreme weather.

Among the projects is $178.4 million to restore passenger service in parts of Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi along the Gulf of Mexico for the first time since Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005.

Toymaker Lego will stick to its quest to find sustainable materials

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—Denmark's Lego said on Monday that it remains committed to its quest to find sustainable materials to reduce carbon emissions, even after an experiment by the world's largest toymaker to use recycled bottles did not work.

Lego said it has "decided not to progress" with making its trademark colorful bricks from recycled plastic bottles made of polyethylene terephthalate, known as PET, and after more than two years of testing "found the material didn't reduce carbon emissions."

Still, the toymaker remains "fully committed to making Lego bricks from sustainable materials by 2032," it added

Two years ago, the privately-held group which makes its bricks out of oil-based plastic, started researching a potential transition to recycled plastic bottles made of PET plastic, which doesn't degrade in quality when recycled.

It had invested "more than $1.2 billion in sustainability initiatives" as part of efforts to transition to more sustainable materials and reduce our carbon emissions by 37% by 2032, Lego said.

The company said it was "currently testing and developing Lego bricks made from a range of alternative sustainable materials, including other recycled plastics and plastics made from alternative sources such as e-methanol."

Also known as green methanol, e-methanol is composed of waste carbon dioxide and hydrogen, created by using renewable energy to split water molecules.

Lego said it will continue to use bio-polypropylene, the sustainable and biological variant of polyethylene—a plastic used in everything from consumer and food packaging to tires —for parts in Lego sets such as leaves, trees and other accessories.

"We believe that in the long-term this will encourage increased production of more sustainable raw materials, such as recycled oils, and help support our transition to sustainable materials," it said.

Lego was founded in 1932 by Ole Kirk Kristiansen. The name derived from the two Danish words, leg and godt, which together mean "play well." The brand name was created unaware that lego in Latin means "I assemble."

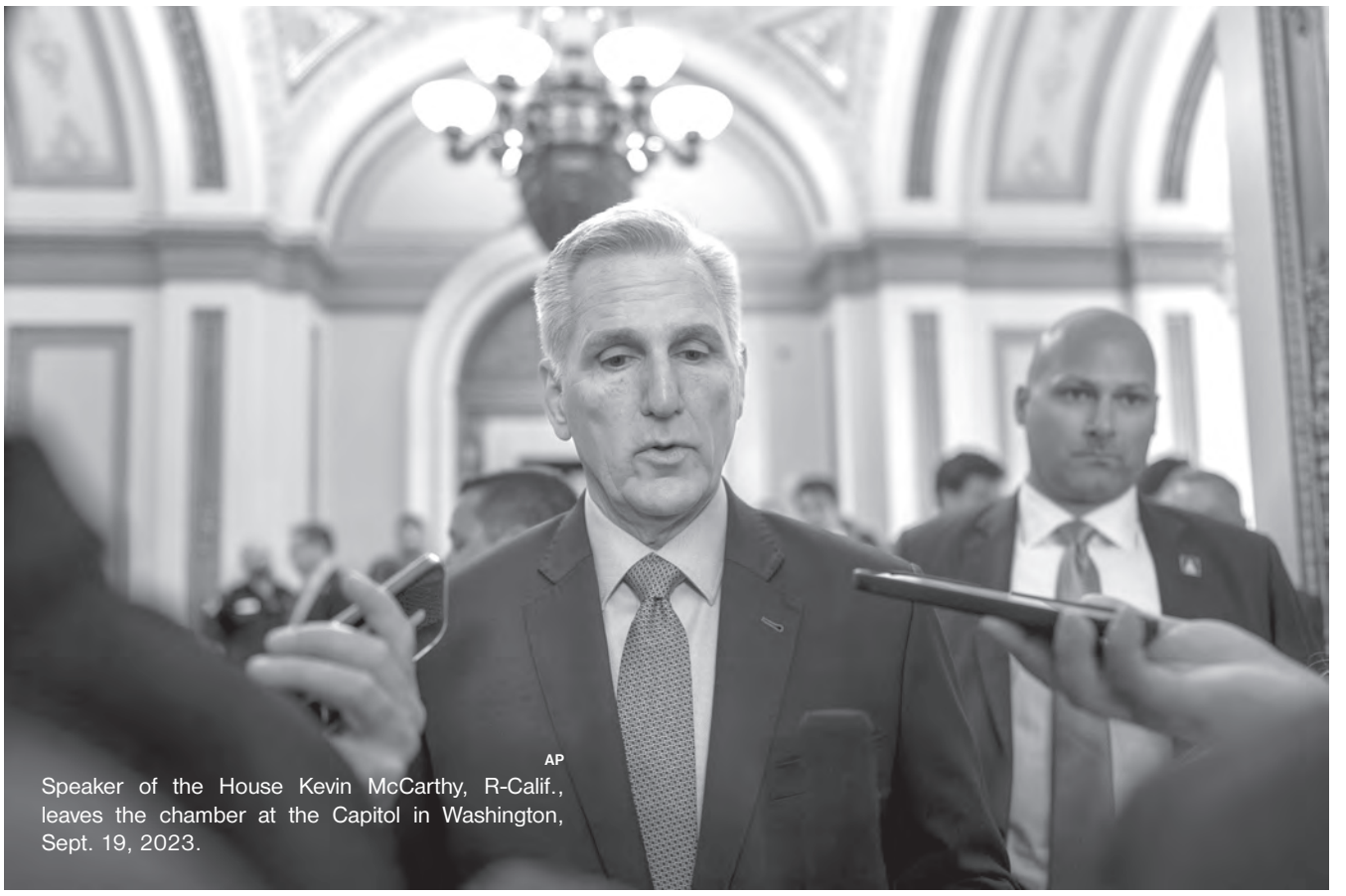
Nation

With gov't shutdown just days away, Congress moving into crisis mode

WASHINGTON (AP)—With a government shutdown five days away, Congress is moving into crisis mode as Speaker Kevin McCarthy faces an insurgency from hard-right Republicans eager to slash spending even if it means curtailing federal services for millions of Americans.

There's no clear path ahead as lawmakers return with tensions high and options limited. The House is expected to vote Tuesday evening on a package of bills to fund parts of the government, but it's not at all clear that McCarthy has the support needed to move ahead.

Meanwhile, the Senate, trying to stave off a federal closure, is preparing its own bipartisan plan for a stopgap measure to buy some time and keep offices funded past Saturday's deadline as work in Congress continues. But plans to tack on additional Ukraine aid have run into trouble as a number of Republicans in both the House and Senate oppose spending more money on the war effort.



AP

Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., leaves the chamber at the Capitol in Washington, Sept. 19, 2023.

Against the mounting chaos, President Joe Biden warned the Republican conservatives off their hardline tactics, saying funding the federal government is "one of the most basic fundamental responsibilities of Congress."

Biden implored the House Republicans not to renege on the debt deal he struck earlier this year with McCarthy, which set the federal government funding levels and was signed into law after approval by both the House and Senate.

"We made a deal, we shook hands, and said this is what we're going to do. Now, they're reneging on the deal," Biden said late Monday.

"If Republicans in the House don't start doing their jobs, we should stop electing them."

A government shutdown would disrupt the U.S. economy and the lives of millions of Americans who work for the government or rely on federal services—from air traffic controllers who would be asked to work without pay to some 7 million people in the Women, Infants and Children program, including half the babies born in the U.S., who could lose access to nutritional benefits, according to the White House.

It comes against the backdrop of the 2024 elections as Donald Trump, the leading Republican to challenge Biden, is egging on the Republicans in Congress to "shut it down" and undo the deal McCarthy made with Biden.

Republicans are also being encouraged by former Trump officials, including those who are preparing to slash government and the federal workforce if the former president retakes the White House in the 2024 election. With five days to go before Saturday's deadline, the turmoil is unfolding as House Republicans hold their first Biden impeachment inquiry hearing this week probing the business dealings of his son, Hunter Biden.

"Unless you get everything, shut it down!" Trump wrote in all capital letters on social media. "It's time Republicans learned how to fight!"

McCarthy arrived at the Capitol early Monday after a tumultuous week in which a handful of hard-right Republicans torpedoed his latest plans to advance a usually popular defense funding bill. They brought the chamber to a standstill and leaders sent lawmakers home for the weekend with no endgame in sight.

After the House Rules Committee met Saturday to prepare for this week's voting, McCarthy was hopeful the latest plan on a package of four bills, to fund Defense, Homeland Security, Agriculture, and State and Foreign Operations, would kickstart the process.

"Let's get this going," McCarthy said. "Let's make sure the government stays open while we finish our job passing all the individual bills."

But at least one top Trump ally, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., who is also close to McCarthy, said she would be a "hard no" on the vote to open debate, known as the Rule, because the package of bills continues to provide at least $300 million for the war in Ukraine.

Other hard-right conservatives and allies of Trump may follow her lead.

"Now you have a couple of new people thinking about voting against the Rule," said Rep. Ken Buck, R-Colo., referring to the upcoming procedural vote.

Sen. Menendez rejects calls to resign

UNION CITY, N.J. (AP)—Democratic U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez of New Jersey defiantly pushed back against federal corruption charges on Monday, saying nearly half a million dollars in cash authorities found in his home was from his personal savings, not from bribes, and was on hand for emergencies.

» Says cash found in home wasn't bribe proceeds

Rejecting rising calls for him to resign, the influential chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said he believed he'd be cleared of charges that he took cash and gold in illegal exchange for helping Egypt and New Jersey business associates.

"I recognize this will be the biggest fight yet, but as I have stated throughout this whole process, I firmly believe that when all the facts are presented, not only will I be exonerated, but I still will be New Jersey's senior senator," Menendez said at Hudson County Community College's campus in Union City, where he grew up.

He did not respond to questions and did not say whether he would seek reelection next year.

Addressing allegations in the indictment unsealed Friday that authorities found cash stuffed in envelopes and clothing at his home, Menendez said that stemmed from his parents' fear of confiscation of funds from their time in Cuba.

"This may seem old fashioned, but these were monies drawn from my personal savings account based on the income that I have lawfully derived over those 30 years," he said.

Authorities recovered about 10 envelopes with tens of thousands of dollars in cash that had the fingerprints of one of the other defendants in the case on them, according to the indictment.

Menendez also addressed his relationship with Egypt, which plays a central role in the indictment against him, suggesting he's been tough on the country over its detention of Americans and other "human rights abuses."

"If you look at my actions related to Egypt during the period described in this indictment and throughout my whole career, my record is clear and consistent in holding Egypt accountable," he said.

Prosecutors say he met with Egyptian military and intelligence officials, passed along non-public information about employees at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and ghostwrote a letter on behalf of Egypt asking his Senate colleagues to release a hold on $300 million worth of aid. He did not directly address those allegations Monday.

Trump argues First Amendment protects him from 'insurrection' cases

DENVER (AP)—Attorneys for former President Donald Trump argue that an attempt to bar him from the 2024 ballot under a rarely used "insurrection" clause of the Constitution should be dismissed as a violation of his freedom of speech.

The lawyers made the argument in a filing posted Monday by a Colorado court in one of the most significant of a series of challenges to Trump's candidacy under the Civil War-era clause in the 14th Amendment. The challenges rest on Trump's attempts to overturn his 2020 loss to Democrat Joe Biden and his role leading up to the violent Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

"At no time do Petitioners argue that President Trump did anything other than engage in either speaking or refusing to speak for their argument that he engaged in the purported insurrection," wrote attorney Geoffrey Blue.

Trump also will argue that the clause doesn't apply to him because "the Fourteenth Amendment applies to one who 'engaged in insurrection or rebellion,' not one who only 'instigated' any action," Blue wrote.

The former president's lawyers also said the challenge should be dismissed because he is not yet a candidate under the meaning of Colorado election law, which they contend isn't intended to settle constitutional disputes.

The motion under Colorado's anti-SLAPP law, which shields people from lawsuits that harass them for behavior protected by the First Amendment, will be the first of the 14th Amendment challenges filed in multiple states to be considered in open court. It was filed late Friday and posted by the court Monday.

Denver District Judge Sarah B. Wallace has scheduled a hearing on the motion for Oct. 13. A hearing on the constitutional issues will come on Oct. 30.

Whatever Wallace rules, the issue is likely to reach the U.S. Supreme Court, which has never heard a case on the provision of the 14th Amendment, which was ratified in 1868, three years after the Civil War ended. The clause has only been used a handful of times.

The Colorado challenge stands out because it was the first filed by an organization with significant legal resources, in this case a liberal group called Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington. A second liberal group, Free Speech For The People, has also filed a challenge to Trump's candidacy in Minnesota that is scheduled to be heard by that state's high court on Nov. 2.

Section Three of the amendment bars from office anyone who once took an oath to uphold the Constitution but then "engaged" in "insurrection or rebellion" against it. Its initial intent was to prevent former Confederate officials from becoming members of Congress and taking over the government.

Trump's contention that he is protected by freedom of speech mirrors his defense in criminal cases charging him for his role in the Jan. 6 attack. There, too, he argues he was simply trying to bring attention to what he believed was an improper election—even though dozens of lawsuits challenging the results had already been rejected.

Prosecutors in those cases and some legal experts have noted that Trump's offenses go beyond speech, to acts such as trying to organize slates of fake electors that Congress could have recognized to make him president again.

The criminal cases have already bled into the 14th Amendment challenge in Colorado. On Friday, Wallace issued an order barring threats and intimidation in the case after the plaintiffs noted that Trump has targeted lawyers and witnesses in the criminal proceedings against him.

Asia

PH coast guard removes barrier placed by China in disputed shoal

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine coast guard said it has complied with a presidential order to remove a floating barrier placed by China's coast guard to prevent Filipino fishing boats from entering a lagoon in a disputed shoal in the South China Sea.

Philippine officials condemned the installation of the 300-meter (980-foot) -long barrier at the entrance to the lagoon at Scarborough Shoal as a violation of international law and the Southeast Asian nation's sovereignty. The coast guard's report Monday that it had removed the barrier underscores intensifying Philippine efforts to fight China's increasingly aggressive actions, against many odds, in one of the world's most hotly contested waters.

Chinese coast guard vessels laid the rope and net barrier, held up by buoys, last week as a Philippine government fisheries vessel approached and more than 50 Philippine fishing boats swarmed outside the shoal, the Philippine coast guard said.

It said in a statement Monday night that it successfully removed the floating barrier in a "special operation" in compliance with the order of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. It did not provide other details, such as whether the entire barrier was removed, when the operation occurred and how Chinese coast guard ships, which have closely guarded the shoal for years, reacted.

"The decisive action of the Philippine coast guard to remove the barrier aligns with international law and the Philippines' sovereignty over the shoal," the coast guard said. It said it "remains committed to upholding international law, safeguarding the welfare of Filipino fisherfolk and protecting the rights of the Philippines in its territorial waters."

Video issued by the Philippine coast guard in Manila shows a diver cutting part of what appears to be the barrier rope. In another video, a man on a motorboat tries to lift what appears to be part of the barrier.

Earlier Monday, Philippine National Security Adviser Eduardo Ano said that "the placement by the People's Republic of China of a barrier violates the traditional fishing rights of our fishermen."

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the shoal and its adjacent waters are "China's inherent territory," where Beijing "has indisputable sovereignty."

A Philippine government fisheries vessel "trespassed into the waters" without China's permission last Friday, Wang said, and "attempted to intrude into the lagoon" of the shoal. "China's coast guard took the necessary measures to stop and warn off the ship in accordance with the law, which was professional and with restraint," he added.

It's the latest flare-up in long-simmering territorial disputes in the busy and resource-rich waterway, most of which is claimed by China. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan are involved with China in the conflicts, which have long been regarded as a potential Asian flashpoint and a delicate fault line in the U.S.-China rivalry in the region.

Washington lays no claim to the sea passageway, a major global trade route, but U.S. Navy ships and fighter jets have carried out patrols for decades to challenge China's expansive claims and promote freedom of navigation and overflight. China has told the U.S. to stop meddling in what it says is a purely Asian dispute.

The Chinese barrier denied Filipinos access to the rich fishing lagoon surrounded by underwater coral outcrops, Philippine coast guard spokesperson Commodore Jay Tarriela said.

He said China's coast guard installs the removable barrier when Philippine fishing boats show up in large numbers near the shoal.

"It's an illegal and illegitimate action coming from the People's Republic of China," Tarriela told reporters. "Definitely it affects our food security."

A Philippine Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources ship which anchored off Scarborough on Friday and at least 54 Filipino fishing boats were ordered by four Chinese coast guard ships by radio to leave the territory, saying the Filipinos were breaching Chinese and international law. The Philippine fisheries ship insisted in its radio response that it was on a routine patrol in Philippine waters, Tarriela said.

ASIAN BRIEFS

S. Korea's Yoon calls for a strong military amid deepening N. Korean-Russian ties

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea's president on Tuesday urged his troops to build an "unwavering military spirt" and train harder, as he used an Armed Forces Day speech to vow immediate retaliation against any potential provocation by North Korea. President Yoon Suk Yeol's speech came amid growing concern that North Korea is pushing to acquire Russian support to boost its nuclear arsenal in return for refilling Russia's conventional arms stores exhausted by its war with Ukraine. "Above all, the cornerstone of our robust national defense lies in your unwavering military spirit, strong commitment, and a clear definition of who your enemies are," Yoon said to troops during the Armed Forces Day ceremony, after reviewing soldiers and weapons systems at a military airport near Seoul. "I strongly urge you to train hard every day with the discipline demanded in real combat situations," Yoon said. Yoon called North Korea's advancing nuclear program "an existential threat to our people," but said South Korea's military will immediately retaliate against any North Korean provocation. He reiterated that if North Korea uses nuclear weapons, its government will be brought to an end by "an overwhelming response" by the South Korean and U.S. forces.

Thailand receives first Chinese visitors under new visa-free policy to boost tourism

BANGKOK (AP)—Top Thai officials welcomed hundreds of Chinese tourists at Bangkok's international airport on Monday, the first day of a new visa-free entry program that officials say will boost the country's tourism industry that was badly damaged by the coronavirus pandemic. Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin handed out gifts and posed for pictures as his tourism minister and other VIPs greeted about 300 travelers from Shanghai. The surprised tourists were entertained by Thai traditional dancers and drummers inside the arrivals area at Suvarnabhumi Airport. "We are confident that this policy will greatly boost the economy," Srettha told reporters. He said that the government plans to promote Thailand's smaller cities as destinations for Chinese tourists to encourage them to stay longer and spend more. Addressing safety concerns among tourists, Srettha said it was the top priority of the authorities. There have been reports and rumors widely circulating on Chinese social media about fraud and kidnapping in Thailand.

World

UKRAINE CLAIMS:

Black Sea Fleet commander among 34 killed in missile strike in Crimea

AP

In this photo provided by the Odesa Region Administration, firefighters work to extinguish a fire in a hotel at the seaport after a Russian rocket attack in Odesa, Ukraine, Monday, Sept. 25, 2023.

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—The missile strike that blasted the Crimean headquarters of Russia's navy last week killed 34 officers, including the fleet commander, Ukraine said Monday, though it provided no evidence to support its claim.

Ukraine's Special Operation Forces said on the Telegram messaging app that its strike on the main building of the Black Sea Fleet headquarters in the port city of Sevastopol had wounded 105 people. The claims could not independently be verified and are vastly different from what Russia has reported.

Russia's military announced the attack on the building and initially said one serviceman was killed but later said the person was not killed but missing. Moscow has provided no further updates.

The Crimean Peninsula, which Russia illegally annexed from Ukraine in 2014, has been a frequent target since Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine 20 months ago. Crimea has served as the key hub supporting the invasion.

On Monday evening, Russian-installed governor of Sevastopol, Mikhail Razvozhayev, said Russian air defenses shot down a missile in the vicinity of the military airfield in Belbek, a village near the port city. He didn't offer any details about possible damage or casualties.

Ukraine has increasingly targeted naval facilities in Crimea in recent weeks while the brunt of its summer counteroffensive makes slow gains in the east and south of Ukraine, the Institute for the Study of War said. It followed Friday's attack with another barrage on Saturday.

The new death and casualty figures are a steep increase from what Ukraine's intelligence chief, Kyrylo Budanov, told Voice of America on Saturday when he said at least nine people were killed and 16 others wounded in the attack that left the building smoldering. He also said Alexander Romanchuk, a Russian general commanding forces along the key southeastern front line, was "in a very serious condition."

The new report indicates that the fleet's chief, Adm. Viktor Sokolov, was also killed, though no supporting evidence was offered. He was not named in the statement by the Special Operation Forces, but Anton Gerashchenko, adviser to the minister of internal affairs of Ukraine posted his name and a photo on social media.

Libya jails eight officials for potential negligence in deadly collapse of dams

CAIRO (AP)—Libya's chief prosecutor said Monday he ordered the detention of eight current and former officials pending his investigation into the collapse of two dams earlier this month, a disaster that sent a wall of water several meters high through the center of a coastal city and left thousands of people dead.

The two dams outside the city of Derna broke up on Sep. 11 after they were overwhelmed by Storm Daniel, which caused heavy rain across eastern Libya. The failure of the structures inundated as much as a quarter of the city, officials have said, destroying entire neighborhoods and sweeping people out to sea.

Government officials and aid agencies have given estimated death tolls ranging from more than 4,000 to over 11,000. The bodies of many of the people killed still are under rubble or in the Mediterranean, according to search teams.

A statement by the office of General Prosecutor al-Sidiq al-Sour said prosecutors on Sunday questioned seven former and current officials with the Water Resources Authority and the Dams Management Authority over allegations that mismanagement, negligence and mistakes contributed to the disaster.

Derna Mayor Abdel-Moneim al-Ghaithi, who was sacked after the disaster, also was questioned, the statement said.

The eight former and current officials didn't provide evidence to spare them from potential charges, and prosecutors ordered them jailed pending the completion of the investigation, the statement added.

The chief prosecutor said eight other officials would be summoned for questioning.

Good Housekeeping

A long shelf helps to provide extra storage.

PHOTOS BY TNS

Wall shelving is used in lieu of cabinetry in this living space.

Design Recipes: Cabinetry alternatives

By CATHY HOBBS
Tribune News Service

Millwork and cabinetry should be integrated into your environment after thoughtful planning, research and in most instances price comparison. In other words, you may want to determine where you would like to splurge and where you might be able to save. If done right, the splurge-versus-save approach when it comes to cabinetry and millwork can result in a space that is functional, attractive and doesn't break the bank.

If you're looking for some cabinetry alternatives, here are some tips on where to splurge and save.

Splurge

Splurge on design. Before purchasing, have a clear design direction for your desired look and feel.

Splurge on quality materials. Choose items such as hardwoods as opposed to softer woods or inexpensive materials that may not last.

The absence of upper cabinetry is replaced by shelving in this kitchen.

Splurge on sturdy construction and installation.

Save

Save by not purchasing expensive hardware. In many instances you can find sturdy hardware through a variety of sources including local artisans, specialty stores and even flea markets.

Save by hiring a professional such as an interior designer or architect. In many cases, homeowners experience costly mistakes by not hiring a professional. Many design stores and cabinetry companies offer complimentary in-house design services.

Save by sourcing sustainably. In many cities you can find businesses that specialize in construction and architectural salvage for bargains as well as leftover builder inventory. Save through these sources and potentially discover a unique or unusual find!

A modern kitchen incorporates both cabinetry and shelving to create an industrial yet functional vibe.

Cathy Hobbs, based in New York City, is an Emmy Award-winning television host and a nationally known interior design home staging expert and short-term rental/vacation home designer with offices in New York City and The Hudson Valley. Contact her at info@cathyhobbs.com or visit her website at cathyhobbs.com.

Ask Angi: What do I need to ask when hiring an electrician?

By PAUL F. P. POGUE
Ask Angi

Electricity is very much the beating heart and blood of your home. The wires behind your walls deliver power to your various outlets and appliances 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and we usually expect them to work all the time. And precisely because electricity contributes so many essential aspects to our homes, you'll usually want to handle any problems as soon as possible.

Ask the following questions to determine whether an electrician is the right fit for your project:

Are you up to date with the National Electrical Code?

The NEC sets the standard for service in most states. It's updated every three years, though not all states adopt the same version simultaneously. The NEC establishes safety rules about installations, sets standards such as the need for GFCI outlets in kitchens and bathrooms, and creates a standardized baseline so all electricians are working from the same playbook.

How do you charge?

Most electricians charge an hourly rate. Many have a minimum rate, even if it's just one hour. You can get more efficiency for your money by bundling multiple small jobs together. However, some electricians charge by the job, so be clear how you will be paying for the work.

Does the job require a permit?

Various cities, counties and states require different permits for different jobs. Smaller jobs rarely require a permit, but larger ones usually do. If you allow your electrician to work without a required permit, you'll fail an inspection. Skipping needed permits also signals that the electrician does not take their work seriously.

Who will be doing the work?

Some electricians do all the work themselves. Others employ helpers and apprentices. This can help keep costs down. However, verify that a licensed electrician will be supervising any unlicensed assistants.

Generally speaking, electricians hold one of three positions.

An apprentice electrician is in training and must be overseen by an experienced electrician.

A journeyperson electrician has completed their apprenticeship, passed a state exam, received their license and can do any kind of electrical work without supervision.

Master electrician is a title reserved for the most experienced electrician. Requirements vary by state, but in most cases, a master electrician must have 4,000 hours of work experience as a journeyperson and pass an in-depth examination. In most cases, master electricians oversee a staff of electricians on complex jobs or in a large contracting business.

Are you familiar with my particular problem?

Make sure the electrician has experience with the issues you're working on. Different problems pose different challenges.

TNS

Many tasks that involve getting into the wiring of your home require the services of a licensed electrician.

Are you licensed, bonded, and insured?

These are always good questions but are particularly vital when hiring an electrician. Electrical work is dangerous and usually governed by code. Licensing provides a critical layer of protection when hiring.

What kind of warranty do you offer?

A high-quality electrician will always stand behind their work and offer a warranty in writing. Ensure you get a written warranty for both the labor and parts.

Life & Style

Longest, fastest, zaniest: Guinness World Records celebrates the 'crazy, fun, inspiring'

NEW YORK (AP) — Do you know the highest average grossing movie franchise in history? That's easy, "Avatar." What about the record for the most balloons popped in one minute by a pogostick? Or the longest journey in a pumpkin boat?

These and many more superlatives are in the latest edition of the Guinness World Records, which for 2024's edition has taken our watery world as its theme. That means there's extra entries for aquatic record-breakers, the largest octopuses, largest hot spring and deepest shark among the 2,638 achievements.

"To me the best records are the ones that you tell your friends in the playground or your mates down the bar, or wherever it is, in the gym. You just say 'Look I saw this amazing thing today.' That to me, is the sign of a good record," says Editor-in-Chief Craig Glenday.

He estimates that 75% to 80% of the entries are new and updated, reflecting a huge oversupply of content. The Guinness World Record researchers get many more records approved than they can fit in a single book.

This year's book is balanced between zany items — most hula hoops spun simultaneously on stilts — to serious science, like heaviest starfish. There are visits to history — pirate ships and shipwrecks — and pages devoted to record-breakers, like musician Elton John and tennis player Shingo Kunieda.

There's a whole series of records just for kids and a new impairment initiative, which gives people with physical and mental challenges the chance to break records within their communities. It is all cleverly packed with facts, drawings and images and puzzles.

Glenday sees the annual book — initially conceived to settle bar arguments — as a fundamentally optimistic collection, one that celebrates ambition and record-breaking as very human things.

AP

This image shows cover art for the latest edition of the Guinness World Records. The 2024 edition has taken our watery world as its theme

"We're all striving to be a bit better at what we do and we enjoy the bit between life and death. So let's just make the most of it. And I think that's why it's maintained its position over the last 70 years — it continues to just amuse and educate and inform and celebrate all these crazy, fun, inspiring things and people."

The team at Guinness World Records get about 100 applicants a day and reject some 95%. Submissions, on the whole, must be measurable, breakable and provable. They may not impinge on someone else's human rights or hurt an animal. And each book is curated annually, so twerking records, a thing just a few years ago, get replaced by TikTok records.

David McCallum, star of hit TV series 'The Man From U.N.C.L.E.' and 'NCIS,' dies at 90

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Actor David McCallum, who became a teen heartthrob in the hit series "The Man From U.N.C.L.E." in the 1960s and was the eccentric medical examiner in the popular "NCIS" 40 years later, has died. He was 90.

McCallum died Monday of natural causes surrounded by family at New York Presbyterian Hospital, CBS said in a statement.

"David was a gifted actor and author, and beloved by many around the world. He led an incredible life, and his legacy will forever live on through his family and the countless hours on film and television that will never go away," said a statement from CBS.

Scottish-born McCallum had been doing well appearing in such films "A Night to Remember" (about the Titanic), "The Great Escape" and "The Greatest Story Ever Told" (as Judas). But it was "The Man From U.N.C.L.E." that made the blond actor with the Beatlesque haircut a household name in the mid-'60s.

The success of the James Bond books and films had set off a chain reaction, with secret agents proliferating on both large and small screens. Indeed, Bond creator Ian Fleming contributed some ideas as "The Man From U.N.C.L.E." was being developed, according to Jon Heitland's "The Man From U.N.C.L.E. Book."

AP

David McCallum, star of the NBC-TV series "The Invisible Man," is shown during an interview with Jay Sharbutt at NBC studios in New York, Aug. 28, 1975.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Sophia Loren has successful surgery after fracturing a leg in a fall at home, agent says

ROME (AP)—Film legend Sophia Loren is recovering from successful surgery for a leg fracture after she fell in her Switzerland home, an agent for the 89-year-old Italian actor said Monday. Agent Andrea Giusti said in an email that Loren fell in a bathroom on Sunday and the surgery was performed later that day. The operation "went very well and now we only need to wait," Giusti said. The actress broke both her hip and a thigh bone, the agent said. It wasn't immediately clear when Loren would be discharged from the hospital. Loren has lived in a Swiss villa near Lake Geneva for decades. Earlier this month, she appeared, looking radiant, with Italian designer Giorgio Armani in Venice at a fashion show held on the sidelines of the city's annual film festival.

Driver pleads not guilty in Vermont crash that killed actor Treat Williams

BENNINGTON, Vt. (AP)—A Vermont driver on Monday pleaded not guilty to a charge in the June crash that killed actor Treat Williams. Ryan Koss, 35, could be sentenced to up to 15 years in prison if he's convicted of gross negligent operation with death resulting. An investigation of the June 12 crash in Dorset concluded a vehicle pulled in front of Williams, who was riding a motorcycle and was unable to avoid a collision, Vermont State Police said. Koss was turning left into a parking lot in an Honda SUV when he collided with Williams' oncoming motorcycle, police said. Williams, 71, of Manchester Center, was pronounced dead at Albany Medical Center in New York. Richard Treat Williams' nearly 50-year career included starring roles in the TV series "Everwood" and the movie "Hair." He appeared in more than 120 TV and film roles, including the movies "The Eagle Has Landed," "Prince of the City" and "Once Upon a Time in America."

Mature couple's marriage lost its spark years ago

DEAR ABBY: I have been married to a man I'll call "Ed" for 15 years. We are seniors, but he is 17 years older than I am. I have three children from a previous marriage who are grown and on their own. I think my husband is gay but never came out of the closet. He watches gay porn and once confessed to me he had a fantasy about another man. For the last 10 years, he has refused to have sex and is always making excuses ("I'm old," "I'm tired," "Tomorrow").

Abby, I crave love and intimacy. Ed is cold, distant and a loner. He refuses to travel or do anything for fun. He's well-off financially, never had kids and is a good provider. However, that is all he does. I want to leave him, but I feel guilty because of his age and because he has been a responsible provider over the years. I love him as a person, but not as a husband. Please advise.

DEPRESSED AND STUCK IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR D & S: There is more to marriage than sex. There is supposed to be communication, affection, mutual respect, understanding and compassion for each other. From what you have written, you have none of those.

Address this with Ed before you freeze to death. Ask him if marriage counseling would help him to better understand your needs. If he refuses, and all you get out of this marriage is access to his money, make an appointment with an attorney to discuss what your rights may be in the "equitable distribution" state of Pennsylvania after a 15-year marriage. After that, you will have a better idea of what to do.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: When I was in middle school, my mother made many poor decisions that culminated in her incarceration and a rather unpleasant boyfriend. Now that I have kids of my own, I feel I have more perspective on my mother's choices —and it's not a flattering picture.

After she was released, she still didn't show up for any significant milestones in my or my siblings' lives. Hearing about the poor decisions she continues to make gets me so upset that a phone call leaves me reeling for a couple days, if not weeks. I have reached the point where I can no longer maintain a relationship with her, so I have gone radio silent.

She has been reaching out for months, apologizing to me and begging for contact. When I get those messages, my heart drops. I know how painful it is when someone walks away, especially a family member. But I can't listen to her anymore. How can I express this to her? I want to handle this with grace, but I just want to cry.

SILENT DAUGHTER IN SOUTH CAROLINA

DEAR DAUGHTER: The "graceful" (and kinder) way to deal with your mother would be to end the radio silence and tell her the truth. Explain that she has missed all the significant milestones in your life, and you are unable to deal with the mess she has made of hers. This is why you prefer she no longer call or try to make contact. You can't fix her, and she can't change the past. Your mental health is important, and it is all right to move on.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

CAN WE TAKE UP WHITTLING?
EEEE.
YOU KNOW ABOUT MY KNIFE PHOBIA. IS THERE SOME OTHER WAY?
WHAT ARE THEY DOING?
SCRAPING AT BARS OF SOAP WITH PLASTIC SPOONS.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

ACCORDING TO THE X-RAY, YOU'RE DECEASED.
THAT CAN'T BE. I'M SITTING HERE, PERFECTLY ALIVE.
DANG, THEN THAT MEANS MY X-RAY MACHINE IS ON THE FRITZ.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 "Waterloo" group
5 Bear hair
8 "Frozen" snowman
12 Chasm
13 Granada gold
14 Ashen
15 In a practical way
17 Victor's cry
18 Spinning dizzily
19 Arts companion
21 Noon, on a clock
22 Words to a backstabber
23 — glance
26 Harden
28 Vends
31 Italian cheese, for short
33 Polite address
35 Mailbox feature
36 Private pupil
38 "Top Gun" target
40 "Uh-huh"
41 Sharp tooth
43 Droid
45 Asian sultanate
47 Pass by
51 Sub shop
52 With glee
54 Competent
55 Unlock, in verse
56 Bosc, for one
57 Approving cheers
58 UFO engineers
59 Perimeter

DOWN

1 Oaxaca water
2 Smooch
3 Erupted
4 Tack on
5 Sondheim musical with the song "I'm Still Here"
6 Online address
7 Partner of Rolls
8 Narcotics
9 By the book
10 Oodles
11 Marshes
16 "The Haj" author
20 ACLU concerns
23 Suitable
24 Sigma's follower
25 In a clever way
27 Allen or Tebow
29 Singer Rawls
30 NASCAR sponsor
32 Bullying bunch
34 Steak orders
37 Chemical suffix
39 Yani Tseng's game
42 Action doll since 1964
44 Hosiery shade
45 Party time, briefly
46 Ms. McEntire
48 Begged
49 Dross
50 Brontë heroine
53 Choose

Solution time: 22 mins.

L	O	S	T		G	A	P		S	P	I	T
I	R	A	S		U	P	S		T	E	R	I
S	C	R	A	P	E	B	Y		A	R	O	N
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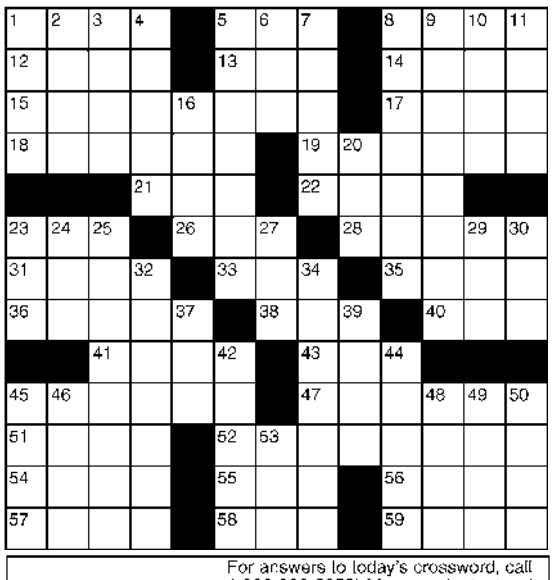
			S	O	S		D	U	E			
A	N	N	A	N		C	Y	M	B	A	L	S
D	I	A	L		T	E	E		I	B	E	T
O	N	T	A	R	I	O		T	R	A	W	L
			D	I	P		P	H	D			
M	A	M	B	O		A	H	A		M	B	A
O	R	E	O		S	L	O	W	B	A	L	L
S	L	A	W		H	O	N		U	R	A	L
T	O	L	L		Y	E	E		N	A	B	S

Yesterday's answer 9-27



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Lola Kirke, 33; Avril Lavigne, 39; Anna Camp, 41; Tamara Taylor, 53.

Happy Birthday: Keep life simple, factual and stress-free. Your decisions will determine how you feel and how far you get. Associate with people who have something to contribute and are willing to do their fair share, but don't feel the need to tag along with anyone who wants you to walk a path that has no meaning or purpose for you. Savor beneficial relationships. Your numbers are 4, 17, 20, 26, 34, 38, 43.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Reach out to people who push you to try new things and participate in events promoting what you have to offer. A potential partnership needs monitoring. You will likely bring out the best and worst in one another. Proceed with caution. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Take better care of yourself and your relationships. Don't let unacceptable behavior be your downfall; poor health or financial choices can cause vulnerability. Consider what's possible and how to utilize your intelligence. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Refuse to get trapped in someone else's dilemma. Don't believe everything you hear or get lured in by sob stories. Put more time and effort into personal appearances, meaningful relationships and physically making your life and surroundings suit your needs. Make happiness your goal. ✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Dedicate more time to listening and learning. What you discover will help you move from one situation to another quickly. Sidestep anyone trying to interfere with your progress or monopolize your time doing things that don't interest you. Be true to yourself. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Take nothing for granted. Look at every angle and say no to frivolous or uncertain ideas. Pay attention to how you can mold your skills into something you enjoy doing. Concentrate on investments and making your money work for you. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Change can be good if you don't hesitate. Size up situations and set boundaries to avoid taking on too much, overspending or any other enticement that comes your way. Keep life simple, your facts straight and your health immaculate. Concentrate on learning, saving, peace and love. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Pay homage to the ones you love. Your actions will make a difference to someone who needs encouragement. Don't let ego or anger cause problems at home or when dealing with joint endeavors. Protect what you have and say no to temptation. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Make your mark, press forward with discipline and approach people heading in a similar direction. A partnership will help you maintain your momentum to meet your deadline. Practicality, imagination and creativity will get you where you want to go. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* False information will slow you down. Don't rely on others to do things for you. Take control of your destiny and invest your skills, knowledge and experience into your best work. Hard work, discipline and distancing yourself from interference will pay off. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Use brainpower to overcome adversity. Rely on experience and ingenuity to point you in the right direction. A domestic change will help alleviate stress, lower overhead or encourage you to engage in a healthier lifestyle. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Keep moving in a direction that soothes your soul and eases stress. Disregard what others choose to do and go about your business. Pay attention to what others request, and don't be afraid to say no. A simple lifestyle will lead to personal freedom. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Come up with a plan and follow through. Don't let anyone guilt you into something you don't want. Give your all, and don't lose sight of your objective. Your intuition won't let you down. Follow your instincts and everything will fall into place. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are dedicated, cooperative and astute. You are innovative and productive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			7	9				3
	2	1		5		9		
3								
	3	2					6	
9			3					7
7	1				6			
	7	4	6	8			3	
8	6	9				2	1	

Difficulty: ★★★ 9/27

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

2	8	1	3	6	7	5	9	4
6	4	9	5	2	8	1	3	7
5	3	7	1	4	9	6	8	2
7	9	4	8	3	6	2	1	5
3	1	6	4	5	2	9	7	8
8	2	5	7	9	1	4	6	3
9	6	3	2	7	4	8	5	1
1	5	2	9	8	3	7	4	6
4	7	8	6	1	5	3	2	9

Difficulty: ★★ 9/26

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

TOURMALINE — Solution: 7 letters

W	P	R	A	D	I	A	N	T	K	E	N	Y	A	T
F	A	Y	A	C	I	R	F	A	N	M	L	E	E	K
H	O	T	R	R	V	L	R	O	H	C	S	N	N	C
A	E	R	E	A	I	A	T	Ⓡ	I	N	G	I	C	I
R	T	G	M	R	M	S	L	O	Ⓞ	A	P	A	R	H
D	I	A	L	U	M	I	N	U	M	Ⓒ	L	M	Y	P
N	V	G	N	E	L	E	D	G	E	A	Ⓚ	M	S	R
E	A	R	G	T	L	A	L	H	N	S	A	T	T	O
S	R	A	H	B	I	V	B	O	C	G	H	A	A	M
S	D	N	A	H	I	Q	G	I	N	A	R	I	L	A
T	D	I	L	O	S	I	U	E	A	A	R	I	N	T
R	T	T	L	N	R	I	S	E	C	R	O	V	U	E
E	A	E	O	T	O	I	L	S	S	H	A	P	E	M
A	T	R	B	L	U	E	N	O	R	O	B	P	A	D
K	I	M	E	M	I	N	E	O	P	A	Q	U	E	L

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Africa, Aluminum, Antique, Blue, Boron, Carat, Carved, Crystal, Dravite, Elbaite, Formula, Gemstone, Granite, Hardness, Iron, Kenya, Magnesium, Magnet, Maine, Metamorphic, Mine, Nigeria, Oils, Opal, Opaque, Paraiba, Pink, Polish, Prism, Pyramid, Radiant, Rare, Ring, Rock, Rough, Schorl, Shape, Shine, Solid, Streak, Trigonal, Value, Violet, Watermelon

Yesterday's Answer: Penny

The NEW **Wonderword Grand Millennium #1** in LARGE PRINT is now available at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Hurts throws for TD, runs for another as Eagles thump Bucs

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Jalen Hurts and the Philadelphia Eagles are unbeaten, but not perfect or even as good as they feel they can be.

"Everybody wants us to be a final product now, but it's a growth. You want to grow every day," coach Nick Sirianni said after the defending NFC champions dominated the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 25-11 on Monday night.

"We're not going to be playing our best football until we get going into the season," Sirianni added. "We've still got things to work on, we've still got growth to do."

Hurts threw for a touchdown, ran for another and led the Eagles on a game-ending drive that lasted more than nine minutes.

Philadelphia won its first eight games a year ago and is off to a 3-0 start in consecutive seasons for the first time since 1992-93.

"At the end of the day it's about catching, it's about throwing, it's about taking care of the football, it's about taking away the football, it's about tackling, it's about blocking, it's about getting off blocks. Those are the key fundamentals to playing football, and our guys really did a good job of putting that extra work in," Sirianni said. "That's going to continue to take us through the season."

Hurts improved to 20-1 over his last 21 regular-season games. He tossed a 34-yard TD pass to Olamide Zaccheaus that helped Philly build a 13-3 halftime lead, and his 1-yard scoring run on a quarterback sneak gave the Eagles a 17-point advantage early in the second half.

The Eagles led 25-3 by the time the Bucs finally got into the end zone on Baker Mayfield's 1-yard TD throw to Mike Evans. A 2-point conversion trimmed Philadelphia's lead to 14 with 9:22 remaining, but Hurts and the Eagles never let Tampa Bay get the ball back.

AP

Philadelphia Eagles' Jalen Hurts, center, scores a touchdown during the second half of an NFL football game against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Monday, Sept. 25, 2023, in Tampa,

"At that point we're hoping to get the ball back, score quick and make it interesting," Mayfield said.

"We didn't play a good ballgame. They were a lot to do with that," Bucs coach Todd Bowles said. "We can't mope about it."

Hurts was 4 of 5 passing and ran for a first down on the final drive.

"Outside of some turnovers on my behalf, I think we did a really good job of executing," Hurts said. "We've got to do a better job of controlling the things we can. But we've got three wins down and we're going to continue to build off of that as a team and hold each other accountable. That's the name of the game."

The Bucs (2-1) lost for the first time with Mayfield at quarterback, turning the ball over twice after playing turnover-free against Minnesota and Chicago. The Bucs' usually reliable defense struggled, too, yielding 201 yards rushing.

A week after running for a career-high 175 yards, D'Andre Swift ran for 130 yards on 16 attempts for Philadelphia. Hurts was 23 of 37 passing for 277 yards and two interceptions, while A.J. Brown finished with nine receptions for 131 yards for the Eagles — one of just three NFL teams that remain unbeaten, along with Miami and San Francisco.

Mayfield completed 15 of 25 passes for 146 yards, one touchdown and an interception. Evans had five receptions, giving him 700 in his career.

"It's all on us. I hope we can play them again in the future," Evans said. "We had a lot of opportunities. I just wish I could have started faster and helped our team."

Twelve of the past 14 teams to start 3-0 have gone on reach the playoffs.

Ronde Barber's 92-yard interception return for a touchdown that sealed Tampa Bay's victory over the Eagles in the 2002 NFC championship game in Philadelphia is perhaps the most memorable play in Tampa Bay franchise history. The former Bucs star was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in August and received his Hall of Fame Ring of Excellence at halftime Monday night.

BENGALS 19, RAMS 16

CINCINNATI (AP)—After missing most of training camp with a calf injury, Joe Burrow is still working his way back into form.

Monday night's 19-16 win over the Rams, the first by the Cincinnati Bengals this season, went a long way.

The Pro Bowl quarterback shook off the lingering effects of the right calf strain that kept his status in doubt right up until game time. He wasn't quite as mobile as usual and didn't record a touchdown pass—but he managed to help the Bengals (1-2) get up off the canvas.

"I pride myself on my availability," Burrow said. "There is risk to go out there and potentially reinjure it. But there's also risk to go out there and be 0-3."

Burrow finished 26 for 49 for a season-high 259 yards and also threw his second interception this season. His favorite target, Ja'Marr Chase, broke out with 12 catches for 141 yards, although nine different Bengals were recipients of Burrow's passes during the evening.

Chase's longest catch was a 43-yarder that came during a third-quarter drive that led to the third of four field goals by Evan McPherson.

Burrow told Chase during pregame warmup that he was going to play.

"I didn't want him to play," Chase said. "It just shows that Joe is hard-headed. But he's a football player. It takes a lot to be a quarterback and also be injured.

"We needed to get this win," Chase said. "I was just being there for Joe. All I could do is try to make Joe look good."

Joe Mixon's 14-yard touchdown run in the third quarter gave the reigning AFC North champs their first lead of the season. Meanwhile, linebacker Logan Wilson picked off Los Angeles quarterback Matthew Stafford twice and the Bengals sacked him six times.

Stafford threw a 1-yard scoring pass to Tutu Atwell with just over a minute left in the game, and the PAT got the Rams within three points, but Mitchell Wilcox fell on the ensuing onside kick to seal the win for the Bengals.

It wasn't clear until just before the game whether Burrow would play. The injury occurred early in training camp, and he aggravated it late in the Bengals' loss to Baltimore last week. Burrow returned to practice on Thursday on a limited basis, and on Saturday the team listed him as questionable.

"In the workout today, (I) felt good enough to play," Burrow said. "Don't have any setbacks, was basically the criteria. It's still day to day. It's good to get through this one. It's going to be better this week than it was last week."

The Cincinnati defense was outstanding. Stafford was sacked twice by defensive end Trey Hendrickson, and Wilson intercepted him once in each half, the second two-interception game of the fourth-year linebacker's career.

"Our defense kept us right in this thing," Bengals coach Zac Taylor said.

Stafford finished 18 for 39 for 269 yards as the Rams slipped to 1-2. Puka Nacua—whose 25 receptions for 266 yards in his first two games was a rookie record—led the Rams with five catches for 72 yards.

Mixon was a workhorse again, carrying 19 times for 65 yards. On Cincinnati's first possession of the second half, he went over left tackle and found a seam to score from 14 yards out, his first TD of the season, to cap a 10-play, 75-yard drive.

"It did feel like we were in striking distance," Rams coach Sean McVay said. "I thought the defense kept us in the game the whole night, and I thought it was really unfortunate, especially early on where we had to settle for field goals where we had some of the looks and some of the opportunities to be able to execute, and we just weren't able to get it done."

Former quarterback Boomer Esiason and receiver Chad Johnson were inducted into the Bengals Ring of Honor at halftime.

Esiason played for the Bengals in 1984-92 and then again for a final season in 1997. He was elected to the Pro Bowl three times and was the NFL MVP in 1988.

Johnson, who was officially known as Chad Ochocinco from 2008-11, played in Cincinnati for 10 seasons and was elected to six Pro Bowls. He's still the team's all-time leader in receptions (751), receiving yards (10,783) and receiving TDs (66).

Raiders' Garoppolo in concussion protocol, putting start for Chargers game in question

HENDERSON, Nev. (AP)—Raiders quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo is in concussion protocol, putting his status in question for when Las Vegas visits the Los Angeles Chargers on Sunday.

Garoppolo was injured in Sunday night's 23-18 loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Coach Josh McDaniels said Monday that he didn't know when the injury occurred, but Garoppolo took several hits in getting sacked four times and his head bounced off the turf on one play in the fourth quarter.

Steelers safety Minkah Fitzpatrick was flagged for roughing the quarterback.

If Garoppolo can't play, the Raiders will go with 15-year veteran Brian Hoyer or rookie Aidan O'Connell.

McDaniels said the discussions haven't yet started on which QB to select, saying the decision will be what's the "best thing for the team."

"We'll be hard at work having to manage that situation the best we can as it progresses," McDaniels said.

Injuries have been a problem for Garoppolo. He suffered a season-ending knee injury in San Francisco's third game of the 2018 season, and in 2020 he missed eight games with ankle injuries.

The Raiders signed Garoppolo in the offseason after parting ways with nine-year starter Derek Carr, who now plays for the New Orleans Saints. McDaniels and Garoppolo have a history back to when both were with the New England Patriots, McDaniels as offensive coordinator and Garoppolo as Tom Brady's backup.

Garoppolo most recently played for the San Francisco 49ers, appearing in two NFC championship games and one Super Bowl.

But he has struggled to find his footing for the 1-2 Raiders, having tossed a league-high six interceptions, including three against the Steelers.

"He scrambled a few times yesterday and made some plays and kept some plays alive, and there are some other times where he's got to make a good decision," McDaniels said. "But that's playing quarterback in the NFL, and he's done it well before."

Like Garoppolo, Hoyer and McDaniels share a Patriots background. Hoyer said before the season he only wanted to play in McDaniels' system.

The Raiders drafted O'Connell in the fourth round out of Purdue, and he had a promising preseason. O'Connell completed 69.4% of his passes for 482 yards with three touchdowns and no interceptions.

Verlander silences Seattle as Astros top M's 5-1 to open key series in playoff race

SEATTLE (AP)—In a season where he said nothing has come easy, Justin Verlander picked the right moment to once again look like the ace he's been for most of his career.

Perfect timing for Verlander. Perfect timing for the Houston Astros.

Verlander took a shutout into the ninth inning, allowing just three hits and worked out of the one jam he faced, and the Astros created some cushion in the AL playoff chase with a 5-1 win over the Seattle Mariners on Monday night.

Verlander put together a vintage performance befitting his status as one of the top right-handers in the game for most of his career. He was on the verge of his first complete game since 2019 when he no-hit Toronto, but manager Dusty Baker pulled Verlander after Josh Rojas led off the ninth inning with a double.

Nevertheless, Verlander did his part with an effort Houston needed after being swept at home over the weekend by Kansas City. The Astros extended their lead to 1 1/2 games over Seattle for the final wild card in the American League. Houston also remained 2 1/2 behind Texas in the AL West.

"This is just one of those years where nothing has been easy. Maybe catch the right timing here and this can be the start of something, hopefully," Verlander said.

Rojas' double snapped Verlander's string of 16 straight batters retired, but the Astros were well on their way to the needed victory before the string was broken. Verlander (12-8) struck out eight, walked one and threw 96 pitches.

"I was obviously kind of running on fumes a little bit, so appreciate the chance to go out there and get a (complete-game shutout)," Verlander said. "It didn't work out, but that's all right."

AP

Houston Astros starter Justin Verlander delivers a pitch during the first inning of a baseball game against the Seattle Mariners, Monday, Sept. 25, 2023, in Seattle.

Seattle lost its fourth straight and for the seventh time in 10 games. The Mariners also fell four games behind Texas in the division.

"All these losses suck right now, but there's nothing we can do about them. Got to keep our heads up and look at the positive side and get ready for tomorrow," Seattle shortstop J.P. Crawford said.

Houston didn't need much offense, but managed one big two-out rally against Seattle starter Luis Castillo (14-8) that scored three runs in the second inning. The Astros added on with long solo home runs from Yordan Alvarez and Kyle Tucker for additional cushion. Alvarez's homer was his 30th of the season and came leading off the third inning. Tucker's homer leading off the sixth gave him 110 RBIs, most in the AL.

Making his first start against Seattle since last year's AL Division Series, Verlander faced traffic on the bases only once. Seattle loaded the bases with one out in the third inning on singles by Dominic Canzone and Rojas and a walk to Crawford. But Verlander got Julio Rodríguez out in front of a curveball and Seattle's young All-Star grounded into a double play to end the threat.

"If it turns into a double play, great, which it did, which was huge. But one of the best hitters in baseball in that situation you're trying to get him out and not let the inning cascade and get away from you," Verlander said.

Verlander didn't allow another base runner until Rojas got him in the ninth. Rojas scored on Rodríguez's sacrifice fly, ending the shutout.

The Mariners had won 10 straight games started by Castillo, but he suffered his first loss since July 14. Castillo threw six innings allowing eight hits, five runs and struck out eight.

"I thought Luis Castillo's stuff was as good as we've seen it all year," Seattle manager Scott Servais said. "Unfortunately, he made a couple of mistakes in the middle of the plate with the fastball in the second inning there."

Castillo was one strike away from getting out of the inning but Mauricio Dubón lined a 2-2 fastball into center field for a hit to score José Abreu. Martín Maldonado followed with an RBI single and Jose Altuve had an RBI single and in the span of six pitches a scoreless game became a 3-0 Houston lead.

"That was big to put a crooked number up there and finally have a lead," Baker said.

Verlander made his 38th career start against Seattle and was the third time he pitched at least seven shutout innings against the Mariners. Verlander's eight strikeouts were the second-most he's had in a game this season.

Verlander won his 256th career game tying him with Andy Pettitte for 42nd all-time.

RANGERS 5, ANGELS 1

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—Adolis García, Mitch Garver and Nathaniel Lowe hit consecutive home runs in the sixth inning, and first-place Texas beat Los Angeles for its sixth straight victory.

Texas maintained its 2 1/2-game lead in the AL West over Houston, which won at Seattle to drop the skidding Mariners four games behind the Rangers with six to play.

Marcus Semien also launched a solo homer for Texas, and Jon Gray (9-8) pitched six strong innings for his first win since Aug. 11. After warming up for the seventh, Gray was removed with right wrist tightness.

Texas hit three solo shots in a row off Jimmy Herget (2-4) to build a 3-1 lead. It was the ninth time in franchise history the Rangers hit three consecutive home runs—and the first since 2015.

Logan O'Hoppe homered early for the Angels. Patrick Sandoval exited in the fourth with tightness in his right oblique.

YANKEES 6, DIAMONDBACKS 4

NEW YORK (AP)—Kevin Ginkel blew the last of Arizona's three leads in a loss to New York that dropped the Diamondbacks into a tie with the Chicago Cubs for the second of three National League wild cards.

Ginkel (9-1) loaded the bases in the eighth inning. He walked in the tying run by issuing a free pass to Oswald Peraza, and Gleyber Torres scored on a sacrifice fly from Estevan Florial to give the Yankees their first lead.

Everson Pereira added an RBI single for a 6-4 advantage.

Ginkel's rough outing, which followed blown leads by Merrill Kelly in the fourth and Ryan Thompson in the seventh, resulted in Arizona's second loss in eight games.

Corbin Carroll had three hits and his 51st stolen base for the Diamondbacks.

Peraza and Austin Wells homered for the Yankees. Ian Hamilton (3-2) got the win and Clay Holmes earned his 22nd save.

GIANTS 2, PADRES 1

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Logan Webb pitched his second complete game this season and pinch-hitter Michael Conforto delivered a two-run single in the eighth inning to lift San Francisco over San Diego in a matchup of NL West teams clinging to slim playoff hopes.

Blake Snell tossed six shutout innings in his latest terrific start for the Padres, lowering his major league-best ERA to 2.25 as the left-hander makes a final push for the NL Cy Young Award.

Webb (11-13) had seven strikeouts and allowed nine hits on 110 pitches for the Giants (78-79), who moved within 4 1/2 games of the final National League postseason spot. San Diego (77-80) is 5 1/2 back of the Diamondbacks and Cubs, who are tied for the last two of three NL wild cards.

One more loss by the Padres, or one more win for the Diamondbacks and Cubs, would eliminate San Diego.

The Padres got runners to second and third with one out in the ninth, but Webb pitched out of it.

MLB-leading Braves are dealing with an ailing rotation as the playoffs loom

ATLANTA (AP)—Baseball's best team has some major pitching concerns heading into the final week of the regular season.

Two of Atlanta's key starters—Max Fried and Charlie Morton—have landed on the injured list in recent days, raising questions about just who'll be available for the Braves in the playoffs.

Spencer Strider (19-5) and Bryce Elder (12-4) are the only two regular starters who appear certain to pitch in the NL Division Series, which starts Oct. 7.

Strider remains confident in his team, no matter who is healthy for the playoffs.

"This whole organization is something to marvel at," he said. "It's not like it's just been 26 guys either. It's been a whole group."

Allan Winans, who has bounced between the big leagues and Triple-A while the Braves dealt with a rash of pitching injuries this season, is among those who could get an unlikely start in the postseason.

"Obviously, I would be pretty ecstatic about the opportunity," Winans told reporters after taking the loss in the first game of a doubleheader Sunday at Washington. "To be part of this team at the crunch time of the season is obviously what you dream about."

The Braves have earned a bye for the best-of-three wild-card round.

If Fried can recover from a lingering blister issue on his left index finger in time for the best-of-five NL Division Series, Atlanta should be able to get by with three starters. Three off days are built into the schedule if that series goes the distance.

Without Fried, the Braves would have to turn to someone they never expected to use for a playoff start.

Morton (14-12) definitely is out until at least the best-of-seven NL Championship Series, which begins Oct. 16 and would require four starters.

Should the Braves advance past the NLDS, they hope the 39-year-old right-hander will be able to return from a sprained index finger. But manager Brian Snitker called that a "best-case scenario," indicating there's a chance Morton could be facing a lengthier absence.

These late-season health woes are a grim reminder of a year ago, when the Braves were upset by Philadelphia in the NLDS after Fried was stricken with a flu bug and Strider dealt with an oblique injury.

Both were roughed up in losses to the Phillies, surrendering a total of 11 hits and 11 runs (nine earned) in 5 2/3 innings.

"There's never a good time, as we saw last year at the end of the year," Snitker said. "It's just those hurdles you have to handle, adjustments you have to make, put things together, maybe do some things you wouldn't normally do to get through."

A patchwork rotation is nothing new for this year's Braves, who have won 100 games for the second straight season even with two of their top starting pitchers missing extended time and the fifth slot in the rotation essentially being a season-long tryout.

Fried, the runner-up for the NL Cy Young Award in 2022, missed nearly three months with a forearm strain. He's made only 14 starts in the big leagues, going 8-1 with a 2.55 ERA.

Kyle Wright, a 21-game winner a season ago, missed nearly the entire season with a right shoulder strain. He rejoined the Braves two weeks ago but was roughed up for 10 runs in seven innings over two starts, prompting Atlanta to shift him to the bullpen for the final week of the regular season to see if he might be more effective.

ACS undefeated in MS hoops

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Agape Christian School Torchbearers are currently undefeated in the ongoing IT&E Interscholastic Boys Middle School Basketball League 2023-2024.

The Torchbearers snagged their fourth straight win after they beat DanDan Middle School Tottots, 41-35, last Friday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

DMS' run for an undefeated season was shattered after they fell to ACS in a close game. It was a give-and-take contest from the start as both teams' mechanics and skill were evenly matched.

ACS had a triple threat of Raffy Cai, Daniel Yang, and Danny Cheng—all three of whom made the majority of the shots. The three made it so they were open to passes and ensured the accuracy of their attempts. Cai put up 19 points, Yang was just a point behind with 18, while Cheng contributed four.

Meanwhile, the Tottots' secret weapon was Dane Tibayan—who led them in the first half with his 10 markers. The Tottots switched it up in the second half though as they passed the ball and gave others opportunities at the basket—which paid off as they caught up to ACS' 12-point first half lead.

However, ACS' well-timed converted free throws from DMS' aggressiveness gave them the lead in the last minutes of the game—resulting in ACS' win.

In other results, Francisco M. Sablan Middle School won a lopsided 54-23 game against Tanapag Middle School; Hopwood Middle School slipped past Mount Carmel School, 28-23; HMS JV defeated Saipan Community School, 24-10; and MCS JV won via forfeit over Saipan International School.

ACS 41 – Cai 19, Yang 18, Cheng 4.

DMS 35 – Tibayan 15, Arriola 5, Manibusan 5, Encabo 3, Sokau 2, Serphim 2, McClure 2, Tomei Jr. 1.

LEIGH GASES

Agape Christian School middle school basketball players pose for a group photo with their coach, before their game in the IT&E Interscholastic Boys Middle School Basketball League 2023-2024 last Wednesday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

NMITA

From page 20

in the world 14's competition."

The NMI also increases its potential for tens of thousands of dollars in additional ITF funding support, contingent upon meeting specific benchmarks.

Cruz, for his part said, "The NMI, a modest entity in the Pacific, envisions a grand future for tennis despite our limited resources. This achievement resulted from a community effort, building upon and reinforcing the leadership and dedication of so many in our Marianas, from our supporters to players."

Recent accomplishments from homegrown talents further underscore this sentiment. Carol Lee made history by being the first junior from the NMI to compete in a Grand Slam and is also set to turn pro this year after securing a commendable No. 7 ranking in the U.S. Intercollegiate Tennis. Colin Sinclair continues to impress on the ATP Tour, with career-high rankings in both singles and doubles.

Cruz emphasized that the successes he witnessed at the meeting could not have been possible without the unwavering dedication of Race, support from the OTF, and guidance of Guam's Torgun Smith.

Cruz added, "Though the milestones achieved in NMI tennis might seem modest globally, they signify giant leaps for our humble tennis community. There's a vision in place, encompassing improved governance, infrastructure expansion, corporate collaborations, nurturing local coaching capacity, and most crucially, ensuring inclusive and equitable junior development. And, because we are a people of tenacity and resilience, we have faith in our vision."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

At the International Tennis Federation Annual General Meeting held in Cancun, Mexico last Sunday, Dr. Bobby Cruz successfully persuaded federation presidents and delegates from tennis nations worldwide to vote in favor of upgrading the NMI's ITF membership status from Class C to Class B—only second in the Pacific region after Guam.

BLUE

From page 20

Jays had an 8-1 lead.

Dat's It tried to inch closer with another run by J.D. Dikito, but once again, that was all the damage they could do against Piteg. Two more runs came at the Blue Jays' turn, followed by silence from Dat's It.

The Blue Jays continued to rack up their hits and runs against Dat's It pitcher Jon Welson and blew the game wide open in the fourth inning with four more runs for a 14-2 game. Dat's It tried to resuscitate their dying offense with three runs in the fourth, followed by two more in the fifth, but it wasn't enough to enforce a full game and therefore ended via run-mercy ruling.

Next, the Bat Boys took this 24-21 win over Saipal at the bottom of the seventh inning with a walk-off 3-run home run by Marvin Leemarvin. Down by three runs, 20-21 at the last inning, the Bat Boys' Nokki Saralu first reached home from an error to tie it up, 21-21. Lamarc Iguel and Harry Nakamura then got on base and in perfect position for Leemarvin to take them home.

Throughout the game, the Bat Boys had the upper hand. Only in their last at-bat did an explosion of runs—nine—come in to overtake the Bat Boys for the lead by just one run. However, Saipal just couldn't seem to catch a break as they lost this game in the last inning just as they had in their previous games.

Mamaaw 14, TuTuRamZ 4

Mamaaw overpowered TuTuRamZ, 14-4, in another run-mercy ruled game.

By the fourth inning, Mamaaw had already scored 14 runs, while TuTuRamZ had put up just three.

Mamaaw's Ze Lifoifoi, Benen Iguel, Jon Norita, and Kodik Lifoifoi led the 10-run, fourth inning onslaught with their home runs.

TuTuRamZ scored just one more run in the fifth inning and the game ended early after that.

PayDayHao 18, Team Mac 3

PayDayHao won a lopsided 18-3 game against Team Mac in this even shorter, four-inning game.

Juan Iguel, PayDayHao's pitcher, allowed only seven runs and almost came out unscathed until Mike Scaliem hit a 3-run home run in the fourth.

However, Iguel's offense was already way ahead as they had already scored 11 runs by the third inning. Seven runs then came in for PayDayHao in the last inning and that was all she wrote as the game wrapped up early after Team Mac failed to score more runs.

Kebruka 23, No Choice 3

It was football scores galore after Kebruka nipped No Choice, 23-3, in the last run-mercy ruled game.

In this one-sided matchup, Kebruka hit nine home runs and scored the majority of their runs in the fifth inning. 11 runs came in and after just a measly two run fifth inning by No Choice, the game was called off then.

Lastly, Seaweed Vibes lost via forfeit to Ready Mix.

Warriors coach Steve Kerr is unconcerned about entering final year of contract

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Steve Kerr has no concerns about his long-term status as coach of the Golden State Warriors despite heading into the final year of his contract.

Owner Joe Lacob and new general manager Mike Dunleavy Jr. have expressed a desire to get a contract extension and Kerr is confident something will work out—even if it doesn't happen before the start of the season.

"I feel great about my position here," Kerr said Monday. "I want to be here. I know Mike and Joe want me here, and so I'm very confident something will get done. But I'm not stressed about it at all. I'm perfectly capable of coaching whether I have one year left or an extension. Makes no difference."

Kerr has a 473-238 record in nine years as Warriors coach and has led the team to four championships and two other trips to the NBA Finals.

He has been a part of a championship core led by Stephen Curry, Draymond Green and Klay Thompson. Golden State extended Green's contract earlier this offseason, keeping both him and Curry under team control through the 2025-26 season.

Like Kerr, Thompson is entering the final year of his contract and Dunleavy said the team wants to get extensions done with both.

"I think when you're working off that idea, you can come to a deal and hopefully we can do that," Dunleavy said. "In those scenarios, there's no real timeline in the immediate future that we have to abide by, so we'll continue to have conversations. But the main goal is secure those guys moving forward, and I think they feel a little bit of the same. We are optimistic, and I think we are in a good place there."

The Warriors are set to open training camp next week with hopes of rebounding from a second-round playoff exit last season.

Golden State never found a good groove in the 2022-23 season, with a preseason practice fight between Green and now-departed Jordan Poole hovering over the franchise all season.

Kerr and Dunleavy have repeatedly talked about a lack of "connectivity" on last season's team and believe that will improve this season.

KANOA

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goals herself, with two goals by Ye Lynn Ha, and a goal each by Ritaline Lizama, Hayven Motisou, and Elikristiana Iglecias.

For Shirley's in the 14U girls division, they defeated Paire FC, 5-2. Stacy Arriola led Shirley's with her hat-trick completion by the 29th minute, which took the lead from Paire, 3-2. Two more goals were made by Alyssa Borlongan as Paire failed to retaliate.

Shirley's also beat Paire in the 17U girls division, 4-2. It was all Borlongan in this game as she scored all four goals for Shirley's. As for Paire's two goals, they were made by Phoenix Gross and Mimi Culp.

In other results, in the U12 division, Matansa FC slipped past Southern United FC, 1-0. In the 14U boys, Latte FC nipped Kanoa 2, 4-2; MP United FC 1 defeated MP United 2, 4-2. In the 14U girls division, SUFC powered past Latte FC, 9-2; Kanoa blanked Kanoa 2, 16-0. In the 17U girls, SUFC trounced MP United, 12-2; and in the 17U boys division, Latte FC put one more over Kanoa, 2-1; and MP United beat Matansa, 7-2.

Hurts throws for TD, runs for another as Eagles thump Bucs.

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ACS undefeated in MS hoops.

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NMITA elevated to Class B in int'l stage

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association reached a historic breakthrough in its tennis aspirations at the International Tennis Federation Annual General Meeting held in Cancun, Mexico last Sunday.

NMITA's status was elevated from a Class C membership—to a Class B membership—after Dr. Bobby Cruz represented NMITA in the meeting.

Among the 20 countries in Pacific Oceania, only Guam previously held Class B status, so the challenge of persuading federation presidents and delegates from tennis nations worldwide to vote in favor of upgrading NMITA's membership status was herculean.

But with the support of NMI national tennis team head coach Jeff Race and the Oceania Tennis Federation leaders, Cruz was successful, as NMI now stands proudly as just the second Class B member in the Pacific region. This upgraded status paves the way for abundant opportunities for NMI tennis.

In the realm of tennis, the ITF stands as the premier governing body, overseeing world tennis, with a global representation of over 200 member nations.

Race said about the upgrade from Class C to Class B, "We can now anticipate the formation of our very own Davis Cup and Billie Jean King Cup teams. The junior division will also benefit, with teams competing

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Dr. Bobby Cruz, second left, poses for a photo with Oceania Federation members after he represented the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association at the International Tennis Federation Annual General Meeting held in Cancun, Mexico last Sunday.

Blue Jays, Bat Boys bash foes in softball

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Blue Jays and Aimeliik Bat Boys bashed their foes in the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association Slow Pitch Open League at the Dan Dan Softball Field last Sunday.

First, the Blue Jays blew Dat's It out of the field, 18-7. An early start with a run by Kyle Foreman and a two-run shot by pitcher Austin Piteg put the Blue Jays in front, 3-0.

Dat's It's Jon Welson nipped a run against Piteg in their at-bat, but the rest of the lineup was quickly shut down. Blue Jays' offense, on the other hand, were just getting started as they put up five runs in the second with the help of a two-run homer by Kier Agda. At this point, the Blue

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LEIGH GASES
In this file photo, Blue Jays' Adam Salalila gauges the ball before his swing during a game in the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association Slow Pitch Open League at the Dan Dan Softball Field.

Kanoa, Shirley's teams prevail in TakeCare youth soccer

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Kanoa Football Club and Shirley's FC teams defeated their foes in Week 2 of the TakeCare Youth Soccer League Fall 2023 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Saturday.

In the U12 boys division, Kanoa blanked Paire, 6-0. Kanoa set the tone of the match early on, with a quick goal by Izaiah Tenorio just a minute in. Teammate Aldric Antonio found it in his possession right after and made it 2-0 in the third minute. Antonio then nipped it in again in the 9th minute, for a 3-0 lead.

Paire was silent throughout the first half and tried to change it up in the second half. However, attempts at the goal never stuck, allowing Kanoa to hold on to the lead. Kanoa then fired three more goals before time ran out for a 6-0 final.

In the 14U girls division, Kanoa won a lopsided, 16-0 over sister team, Kanoa 2. Aubrey White had a field day as she navigated through the pitch and was open at almost every turn, resulting in six goals.

Beatrice Gross collected five

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A Kanoa player in orange goes up against Paire players during their game in the TakeCare Youth Soccer League Fall 2023 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Saturday.